

THE BEST PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE YEAR

STARTING ON PAGE 11

Brian Viner
meets Thora
Hird

Ministers plot to challenge Blair

SENIOR CABINET members are to challenge Tony Blair over the direction he intends to take the Government after Peter Mandelson's resignation.

The Independent has learnt that some senior cabinet ministers plan to use the departure of the chief architect of the "New Labour project" as a cue for reassessment. They are already holding private discussions over the future direction of the Government.

The revelation comes as Mr Blair flew out with his family to the Seychelles last night for a new year holiday. He had considered cancelling the trip but

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

was urged not to by colleagues. "He's tired and needs a break," said a key minister.

He left behind smouldering divisions within the Cabinet after insisting in a BBC radio interview that the "New Labour project" would continue without Mr Mandelson because it was "bigger than any individual".

Mr Blair's remarks were intended to distance him from Mr Mandelson. He told colleagues: "Peter will not be happy." But it emerged that Mr Mandelson had spent Wednesday night at

Chequers with Mr Blair after announcing his resignation.

That left cabinet colleagues confused about the Prime Minister's intentions about Mr Mandelson, and some cabinet ministers saw Mr Blair's remarks yesterday as an open challenge to them.

Accepting the pivotal role Mr Mandelson played in modernising his party, Mr Blair said: "There will be a certain number of people who will be foolish enough to think that Peter's going means that somehow there's some blow to the project of New Labour." But he insisted: "That goes on. We got

elected as New Labour, we'll govern as New Labour." And he said his promotion of three modernisers - Alan Milburn (Chief Secretary to the Treasury), Stephen Byers (Trade and Industry), and John Denham (Health minister) - was a further signal that the modernisers remain on top.

Another cabinet source said: "We support New Labour policies but we are very opposed to this Liberal-Gladstonian agenda. We are not talking about going back to the old Labour. But we want to get rid of the froth of the spin doctors."

One sticking point is the

closer relations with the Liberal Democrats, as part of the anti-Tory project associated with Mr Mandelson. If this is reversed it could leave Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, exposed.

Cabinet ministers said to be opposed to coalition include Jack Straw, the Home Secretary; David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment; the Chancellor, Gordon Brown; and John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister. Mr Mowlem, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, is also said to be opposed.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Sec-

retary and a leading PR supporter, is also seeking to strengthen his alliances in the Cabinet. He spoke to colleagues last week in search of support before the publication of a book by Margaret Cook, his ex-wife.

The Chancellor was under increasing pressure to dismiss Charlie Whelan, his spin doctor, suspected by the Mandelson camp of leaking details of the £373,000 loan to Mr Mandelson from Geoffrey Robinson, the former paymaster-general, which led to his resignations.

Robert Harris, best-selling author of *Fatherland* and a close friend of Mr Mandelson,

disclosed yesterday that he had considered buying a house in London with a flat for Mr Mandelson - which could have avoided the rumour over his Notting Hill house - but opted for a place in the country.

Sources said Mr Mandelson would pay back the loan to Mr Robinson with interest "early in the new year" using money from his mother and his family. He could still be in trouble over his mortgage application for failing to disclose the secret loan. He has written to the Britannia Building Society, from which he borrowed an extra £150,000, setting out his finan-

cial arrangements and asking for its views.

His friends said he is considering making a personal statement to the Commons when it returns next month, but did not want retribution against the Brown camp. The Chancellor checked over the content of Mr Mandelson's resignation letter with him. A spokesman said: "They spoke three or four times on Wednesday. Gordon came back with a few changes. As far as the relationship with Gordon, it is fine."

Resignation call, page 2
Leading article, Review page 3

Nine die as war looms in Kosovo

THE SERBIAN province of Kosovo faced the prospect of full-scale war last night as heavy fighting, involving artillery, grenade and mortar fire, erupted near the village of Obranca, 20 miles north of Pristina, between ethnic Albanian insurgents and Serb security forces.

So fierce were the exchanges, now into their fourth consecutive day, that they could be heard in the Kosovan capital. They are the latest in a series of clashes that began when Belgrade ordered its forces to launch a fresh crackdown on Christmas Eve in retaliation for the murder of several Serbs during 11 days of sporadic fighting across the province.

Albanian spokesmen say nine people have been killed in the latest offensive. It poses the greatest threat thus far to the October ceasefire - and to the monitoring operation of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), set up to make sure it held.

On Christmas Day, mediation led by the US diplomat, William Walker, who heads the OSCE contingent, briefly seemed to have stilled the combat. But yesterday's renewed flare-up only underscored how the Kosovo crisis is on the verge of slipping out of control at the very time of year when, as was commonly said, freezing weather would restore calm at least until spring.

Instead both sides are ignoring the ceasefire in the hope of clinching a decisive advantage. Since their failed summer offensive the guerrillas of the

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) have acquired new arms, including anti-tank weapons which KLA spokesmen claim knocked out seven Serb tanks and 12 armoured personnel carriers in the first day of fighting.

In retaliation Yugoslav officials announced their forces would continue operations around Obranca at least until after yesterday's planned funeral of a Serb farmer whose body was discovered on Saturday. Milovan Radovic, one of the last remaining Serbs in the village, was shot dead at his home, according to the Serb Media Centre, in what was "another crime committed by Albanian terrorists, aimed at creating an ethnically all-Albanian Kosovo".

Unlike the previous fighting, which was blamed on the security forces of the Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, international officials say both sides have breached the ceasefire to the point where it is difficult for OSCE to continue its work. Both sides have gone looking for trouble and they've found it," Mr Walker was quoted as saying. If the Serbs and Albanians did not want to keep their commitments, then there was not much 2,000 unarmed monitors (of whom 600 only are deployed) could do about it.

Once again Albanian refugees are fleeing villages caught up in the fighting. This time they are doing so in sub-zero temperatures.

Can anyone keep the peace? Review page 4



Princes Street in Edinburgh yesterday. Retailers said shoppers were staying away from the sales because they feared redundancy

David Muir/Newsflash

Sales prove to be damp squib

THE CHRISTMAS sales began yesterday but shoppers were unable to find the spectacular bargains they were hoping for. Many said they had been lured by the promise of massive price cuts but were disappointed at the range of discounts on offer.

Pre-Christmas business was slower than expected and retailers were hoping that customers would make up for it at the sales. But the traditional scrum of expectant shoppers was missing.

BY KATE WATSON-SMYTH

The British Retail Consortium (BRC), which represents about 90 per cent of retailers, said that consumer confidence was low and many people had just stayed away.

Last year, faith in the economy was high and hopes of finding a good bargain rose when many stores announced that they had overstocked for Christmas. Shoppers queued through the night hoping to be

the first through the doors to snap up the best prices. Yesterday morning, however, there were only a few early starters waiting for the shops to open and no sign of mass sales fever.

Sharon Gleeson, who waited outside Selfridges in central London, was disappointed by the sale. "I got here early hoping to get a bargain but I just don't think there are any this year. All the stores just seem to have knocked 20 off items," she said.

The BRC's Ann Grain said

stores were aware of the lack of consumer confidence. "Retailers' hopes are that the story of last year will be repeated, in the sense that until after 21 December sales were very slow and then picked up," she said.

"Consumers are much more cautious. There may have been three interest rate cuts but there were six rises before that and people have this fear of depression around the corner. There are redundancies around and people are thinking 'I could be next'."

Laser correction for Short-sight, Long-sight & Astigmatism

To learn how our doctors can eliminate the need for glasses and contact lenses, please attend our

OPEN DAYS

Tuesday 29th December 10am - 5pm
Wednesday 30th December 10am - 5pm
Thursday 31st December 10am - 12pm

ALL VISITORS WELCOME

BRISTOL
13 Clare Street BS1
(bottom of Corn St.)

LONDON
128 Finchley Road NW3
(opp Waitrose)

MANCHESTER
2 Albert Square M2
(opp Town Hall)

BIRMINGHAM
98 Bristol Road B5
(nr MacDonalds drive thru)

GLASGOW
18 Charing Cross Mans G3
(junc. Sauchiehall St)

OPTIMAX
LASER EYE CLINICS

If you cannot attend, please phone for a free information pack

0990-14 33 14

Quote Ref: H04

Police blame Hollywood for rise of hit-men



Bruce Willis in 'Die Hard': 'Glorifying guns'

A RISE in the number of murders by "hit-men" in Britain is linked to more gratuitous violence in Hollywood films, according to one of Britain's most senior policemen.

Roy Penrose, the director-general of the National Crime Squad (NCS), believes gun-toting characters played by stars such as Bruce Willis, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone have encouraged criminals and society in general to become blasé about killing. He said the use of hit-men was a "growing issue" nationally.

He also said that the Gov-

BY JASON BENNETTO AND JOHN DAVISON

ernment's handgun ban, provoked by the Dunblane massacre, had no effect on the supply of firearms to criminals in the UK. Automatic weapons were being smuggled in and were still freely available.

Mr Penrose became the first director-general of the NCS, which has 1,450 officers, when it was set up in April to combat serious and organised crime nationally and internationally.

He says screen violence and firepower has led to a desensitisation of people towards guns and shootings. "I'm conscious of seeing the *Death Wish* films, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bruce Willis - those sort of big macho-type people - shooting bloody great guns," he said. "I believe that society has become more tolerant of violence and has some appetite for violence."

He argued the combined effects of drugs, money and the glorification of guns and violence meant that if someone said "Here's £10,000. Go and blow that geezer away," they just do it - life appears to be cheap.

Police are notoriously reluctant to discuss contract killing, but Scotland Yard sources admit that "hits" have risen steadily in the past five years. Detectives from the Yard's Organised Crime Group estimate there are up to 20 hit-men operating in London alone, with prices ranging from £1,000 to £20,000 depending on the target.

Most contract killings are between rival crime gangs, increasingly in disputes over drug deals. However, a number have involved businessmen disposing of rivals or partners, and even husbands and wives getting rid of an unwanted spouse.

Last month a financial adviser to one of London's most powerful underworld gangs was shot dead on his doorstep by a hit man. Solly Nahome, 48, a diamond dealer, was killed as he returned to his family home in Finchley, north-west London.

In September, Peter Morris, 52, a civil engineer from Wolverhampton, was jailed after admitting soliciting the death of his wife. He paid an undercover policeman a £500 downpayment for the "hit" after a neighbour with whom he had shared his plans went to the police.

Police are notoriously reluctant to discuss contract killing, but Scotland Yard sources admit that "hits" have risen steadily in the past five years. Detectives from the Yard's Organised Crime Group estimate there are up to 20 hit-men operating in London alone, with prices ranging from £1,000 to £20,000 depending on the target.

Most contract killings are between rival crime gangs, increasingly in disputes over drug deals. However, a number have involved businessmen disposing of rivals or partners, and even husbands and wives getting rid of an unwanted spouse.

INSIDE THIS SECTION

Storms kill four
Four people were killed as winds of 110mph lashed British Isles
Home P2

Countdown to euro
The single currency is launched this week
Home P6

Europe's leaders
'Independent' survey reveals the Continent's most important people
Home P7

Mayhem by ski louts
French mayors call for police to guard slopes
Foreign P8

Czechs turn on Havel
The father of the 'velvet revolution' has lost the support of his people
Foreign P9

Liverpool look abroad
Liverpool are bidding for a German goalkeeper
Sport P20

INSIDE THE REVIEW

Anne McElvoy
Testing time for Tony Blair has only just begun
Comment P3

Sue Arnold
Tries a herbal remedy the size of a gym shoe
Comment P4

Rupert Cornwell
Even General Winter cannot freeze the war in Kosovo
Comment P4

Independent traveller
A mother who let her daughter, 16, go alone
Features P6

TV triumphs
And disasters. The year on the small screen
Arts P7

Online life
Techno adventures as Internet grows at speed
Network P8

53
9 770951 946811
TODAY'S TELEVISION
PAGE 12

Embryo created from four animals

HYBRID EMBRYOS created by joining the cells of two different species have been developed by scientists who believe the research could lead to new ways of human cloning.

This is the most compelling support yet for controversial claims that scientists created a cloned hybrid embryo by fusing a man's skin cell with a cow's egg cell.

A team of American scientists from a leading animal cloning laboratory have released preliminary findings of a series of experiments in which they gen-

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

erated early embryos by fusing the cells of four different animal species - including a monkey - with bovine egg cells.

The research, details of which are scheduled to be published early next year in a scientific journal, raises the prospect of using cows' eggs as "incubators" to grow early human embryos, to allow the extraction of vital cells for transplant operations.

Scientists have expressed

interest in the possibility of using bovine eggs for therapeutic cloning - where embryos do not survive beyond 14 days - because of the shortage of human eggs and because it may be ethically more acceptable than using fully human embryos.

Earlier this year an American company, Advanced Cell Technology, which is closely linked to the University of Massachusetts, said its scientists had created a hybrid embryo clone by transferring the cell nucleus of a human skin cell

into a cow's egg that had its own nucleus removed.

The embryo lived for several days and divided about five times to form a 32-cell embryo. However, the company's claims were not supported by published data, leading other scientists to be sceptical.

Details of the new research, by a team led by Professor Neal First, an authority on animal cloning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, have emerged at scientific conferences in America. The experiments indirectly support the claims

of Advanced Cell Technology. Professor First and colleagues Tanya Dominko and Maya Mitalipova successfully produced hybrid embryos by fusing bovine egg cells, which had their own nuclei removed, with cell nuclei taken from the skin cells of sheep, pigs, rats and rhesus macaque monkeys.

Dr Dominko, who now works at the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center in Portland, said the monkey cells were the easiest to use of the four species. "If we can do it with rhesus macaque monkeys,

there is no reason at all to suppose we cannot do it with human cells," Dr Dominko said.

The scientists did not have a licence to transfer the resulting embryos into the wombs of female monkeys, but they did transfer some back into sheep, Dr Mitalipova said. "We showed that the embryo implanted and the pregnancy lasted for about 30 days but we could not recover the foetus."

Professor First emphasised that the intention of the research was not to create adult animals but to produce em-

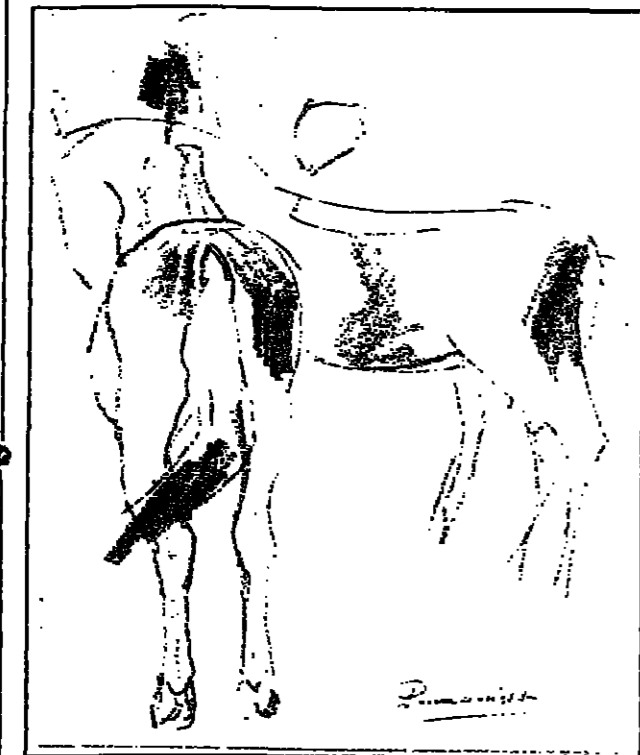
bryos old enough to extract "stem cells", the body's mother cells that develop into the many different types of tissue which can be used for transplant operations.

It is the prospect of extracting human stem cells from early embryos and growing the resulting tissues for transplant operations that has resulted in Britain's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) recommending the use of therapeutic cloning.

Dr Anne McLaren, HFEA member and a distinguished

embryologist, said it was conceivable that scientists in Britain may one day be given a licence to create human-animal embryonic clones.

"They could certainly apply, but they would be turned down at present because of insufficient animal research. We'd need a body of animal work, fully documented, to be done before agreeing this," Dr McLaren said. Professor First's research, when published in the new year, could mark the starting point for licence applications in Britain.



15 years of thefts come to light at Arts Club

ONE OF the country's most venerable clubs has come to a painful conclusion after the disappearance of paintings worth up to £1m: it is harbouring a thief among its members and staff.

The Arts Club, whose founding fathers include Charles Dickens and where the likes of Mark Twain, Anthony Trollope and Winston Churchill relaxed, has been scandalised by a seven-year audit, which uncovered the apparently systematic theft of 45 paintings from its silverware collection.

Today, Tony Banks, Desmond Wilcox and Nick Serota can be seen there, rubbing shoulders with Malcolm Bradbury and Linda Kitson. And if they get together, the topic of conversation would surely be the theft of the paintings. Among works missing from walls and storage rooms at the club in Mayfair, London, are pictures by John Singer Sargent, Augustus John, Jan van Goyen, James McNeill

BY STEVE BOGGAN

Whistler, Frances Hodgkins, Samuel Palmer and Dame Laura Knight.

The club committee has reported the thefts to its insurers, asked the police to investigate and enlisted Trace, the art-fraud detection agency, but the chairman, David Morris, said initial inquiries had found nothing. "It is very sad, because many of the works were bequeathed or presented to the club by artist members."

"Frankly, I find it curious that so many paintings went missing without anybody doing anything about it. The club was closed for refurbishment from 1974 to 1976. From that period to 1991, somebody appears to have systematically removed pictures."

Suspicion over who is responsible is rife among members at the 18th-century town house in Dover Street. Asked whether he thought the thefts went unreported because

someone in a position of authority was involved, Mr Morris, who was appointed chairman six months ago, replied "Yes."

He has written to the club's 1,000 members - who pay subscriptions of up to £525 - for information on the last whereabouts of the various works.

"Inevitably we are talking in some cases about works being rolled up and walked out after dark," he said.

The thefts were uncovered by Michael Preston, an arts design consultant who was appointed keeper of the pictures in 1991 after an incident in which a former chairman, Lord Aberdeen, saw two of the club's paintings for sale at Sotheby's. The sale was halted and a former club official was dismissed.

Since then an examination of records from 1974 to 1991 has identified 45 missing works for which there was no evidence of any sale. The results were re-



Club members Tony Banks and Desmond Wilcox

cently reported to members in the *Arts Club Journal* in an article entitled "Lost and Gone Forever", and they make sobering reading.

"As there appear to be no references to the sale of any of them in committee-meeting minutes or elsewhere or any reported loss of them, one can but assume that they must



have been removed unlawfully," Mr Preston concluded.

Philip Mould, deputy chairman of the club's pictures committee, said: "It has been a slow awakening to horror when one realises how much has gone. A feeling of enormous sadness has descended on the place. We are, historically speaking, the most important club for the

welfare of the arts in London, but we have been the victim of art theft."

"That so many pictures have gone missing is sad, but that they seem to have been taken by someone from the inside is particularly distressing."

Henry Wemyss, a specialist in early English watercolours at Sotheby's, is helping to compile an inventory of the club's art. He said: "When I heard that some pictures were missing, I wasn't surprised. I wouldn't condone it, but you sort of expect a small number to go missing over the years."

"However, I was surprised when I heard how many had gone. I understand it is now thought to be in the region of 50. I have not seen all of them, but the works by Whistler, Augustus John, Samuel Palmer, Laura Knight, Henri Harpignies and Van Goyen could all be of particular importance." Mr Morris said he believed the missing items could fetch up to £1m at auction. He esti-

mated one piece alone - Palmer's *Lonely Tower* by *Moonlight* etching - to be worth £150,000. The club's insurers have rejected its claims because the pictures were stolen so long ago.

Other missing works include Sargent's *Spanish Dancers*; Knight's *Circus Horses*; Harpignies' *Sunset*; John's *Girl in Red Dress* and *Blue Jumper*; Hodgkins' *Fishing Nets*; and Whistler's *St James Street, London*.

While Mr Morris is determined to right the wrongs of the past, there will be those who would prefer to sweep them under the carpet, and a fractions period could ensue.

Nevertheless, the members of the club are stoical and know that worse things have happened. They still talk, with not a little *schadenfreude*, of the member who died, in the finest traditions of the Arts Club, from the effort of extracting the cork from a bottle of claret.



One of the missing works, 'Circus Horses', by Laura Knight (left), and a vacant space amid the club's collection

Mark Childers

Cost of spy HQs to stay secret

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

THE SECURITY services, MI5 and MI6, overspent their budgets for luxury headquarters by an alleged £90m, according to a report by a public spending watchdog. But the Prime Minister has stepped in to block publication of the National Audit Office (NAO) report into the building of the London HQs.

This means the truth about the overspending on furniture and fittings may never emerge, as Mr Blair has agreed the report contains sensitive information about the buildings that could harm security.

MI5 moved to its HQ, which was refurbished, at an estimated cost of £265m. MI6's offices cost an estimated £150m, plus £90m for adaptations.

MPs are demanding publication of the report and the release of information that would not harm the intelligence network under the Freedom of Information legislation being drafted by the Home Office.

The Liberal Democrat MP Norman Baker said it was "outrageous" that secrecy laws were being used to hide the cost of carpets for Britain's spies. "I understand there has been a £90m overspend. It is outrageous that this report cannot be published. All material that was sensitive could be taken out, but we're talking about ordinary equipment, like furniture, plants and carpets. And we're talking about public money. There should be accountability," he said.

Mr Baker called on Mr Blair to publish the NAO report in a recent Commons written question, but Mr Blair said: "No. The reports on the purchase and fitting out of Vauxhall Cross (MI6) and Thames House (MI5) contain sensitive information. It is established practice under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information not to disclose information where disclosure would harm national security or defence."

The issue highlights the growing anxiety of freedom of information campaigners. David Clark, the former cabinet minister for the Cabinet Office, who was in charge of the legislation until being sacked, is worried that the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, will seek a blanket ban on disclosure of all information concerning the security and intelligence services.

The Home Secretary has taken a hard line against those who argue that information should be released unless there is "substantial harm" to national security or defence. He is expected to insist on a wider interpretation of "harm" in the Bill to limit disclosures, and to exclude entirely information about MI6, MI5 and operational details involving the police.

Customs seize ivory and tortoiseshell 'Titanic' props

MORE THAN 30 props from the film *Titanic* have been confiscated because they are made from endangered species. Among them is the tortoiseshell hair clip worn by Kate Winslet in her nude modelling scene with Leonardo DiCaprio.

The film-maker 20th Century Fox used genuine Edwardian dressing table items, sending them from Britain to Mexico,

BY KEITH ELLIOTT

where filming took place. But when the props were brought back into England, Customs officials at Heathrow airport checked a box and found the items were made from parts of tortoises, elephants, crocodiles and a hippopotamus.

The props include brushes, perfume jars, mirrors, cigar

boxes and cigarette holders. There is a cigar cutter made from a hippopotamus tooth and a book of common prayer with an ivory cover.

Although it is not illegal to own goods made from animals such as turtles, alligators or tigers, owners who want to take them out of the country and bring them back have to get an import licence from Customs and Excise. "This is to stop endangered species being killed, and goods made from them being brought back into the country under the claim that they are antiques," a spokesman said.

Ann Ainslie of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species said: "The agent applied for retrospective permits, which were

refused by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, as the agent knowingly shipped the items without obtaining a permit."

A permit costs £10 per species, so for the sake of £30, the film-maker has lost items worth hundreds of pounds.

The items have given a boost to an exhibition at Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liver-

pool - "Titanic and Lusitania, Floating Palaces of the Edwardian Age". It was relying on a 20ft model of the *Titanic* as its main attraction. But the film props are likely to draw bigger crowds.

It is not the first time that the owner of movie memorabilia has been caught out. Gloria Swanson's tigerskin rug suffered the same fate. She gave

the rug to the British novelist Elinor Glyn. When she died, it passed to a relative who wanted to ship it from Los Angeles to her home in Britain - but failed to get an endangered species permit.

After being confiscated, the rug went to the Customs and Excise national museum in Liverpool, where it was renovated and put on display.

Citibank Presents Elton John - The 1998 World Tour.

Free Internet banking.

Get more from your keyboard.

A Citibank Current Account gives you free Internet banking and more:

- 10 times more interest than at least 4 major UK banks
- Free banking - no charges for your everyday transactions in the UK
- Free £500 overdraft
- Free instant withdrawals at any of the 18,000 cashpoints in the UK

Plus, you can call us 24 hours a day - free - giving you access to your finances round the clock around the world.

Find us on <http://www.citibank.co.uk> or call on **0800 00 88 00**

Please quote ref. 1053

Who Says A Bank Can't Rock & Roll?

CITIBANK

*Please note: Interest rate comparison (as at November 1998) between Citibank Current Accounts and Barclays Bank Accounts, National Westminster Bank Accounts, First Direct Current Accounts, and NatWest Current Plus Accounts. Rate is variable, calculated daily, and is the gross p.a. rate on balances of £1,000 or more. Gross interest rate is the rate payable not taking into account any deductions for income tax at the lower rate. Interest is applied and compounded monthly (Barclays quarterly). Overdraft subject to assets with written credit question available on request and is only available if you pay salary into Account. Free Internet banking does not include the cost of modem calls. Account opened with Citibank International plc, subject to eligibility. Registered office: 336 Strand, London WC2R 1HL. © Registered trademark of Citibank NA.

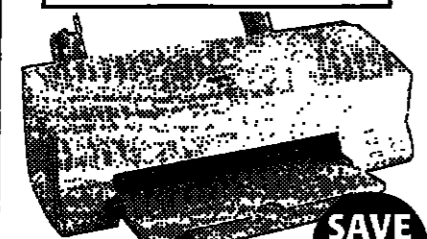
PC WORLD

THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

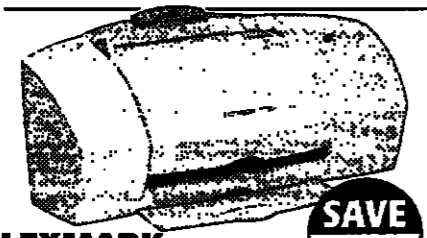
SALE

UP TO 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

SAVE UP TO £50 ON PRINTERS



EPSON
Colour Inkjet Printer
Up to 1440 x 720 dpi resolution.
Up to 6 pages per minute.
MODEL: Stylus Colour 600.
WAS £179.99 **SAVE £50**
SALE PRICE
£129.99



LEXMARK
Colour Inkjet Printer
Up to 1200 dpi resolution.
Up to 6 pages per minute.
Exclusively with Disney's Print Studio Software M020.
MODEL: C15200.
WAS £149.99 **SAVE £10**
SALE PRICE
£139.99

OLIVETTI
Colour Inkjet Printer
Up to 600 x 300 dpi resolution.
Up to 3 pages per minute.
Includes Black and Colour cartridges.
MODEL: JP 192.
LOWEST EVER PRICE
PC WORLD PRICE
£69.99

HEWLETT PACKARD
Colour Inkjet Printer
Up to 600 dpi resolution. Up to 2 pages per minute. Creates banners and greetings cards with the FREE Family Fun Pack.
MODEL: DJ720C.
WAS £199 **SAVE £10**
SALE PRICE
£189

EPSON
Colour Inkjet Printer
Up to 1440 dpi resolution.
Up to 6 pages per minute.
Includes Adobe Photo Deluxe SE.
MODEL: Stylus Colour 740.
WAS £219.99 **SAVE £20**
SALE PRICE
£199.99

HEWLETT PACKARD
Colour Inkjet Printer
Up to 400 dpi resolution. With Hewlett Packard's Photo II for photo quality printing. Up to 9 pages per minute.
MODEL: D1855Cn.
WAS £249.99 **SAVE £20**
SALE PRICE
£229.99

SAVE UP TO £50 ON SCANNERS



VISIONEER
Flatbed Scanner
600 x 1200 dpi optical resolution.
MODEL: 6100b.
WAS £125.99 **SAVE £50**
SALE PRICE
£79.99
FREE Page Scanworks Worth £69.99.



AGFA
Flatbed Scanner
600 x 1200 dpi optical resolution.
MODEL: 1212p.
WAS £129 **SAVE £10**
SALE PRICE
£119
FREE Page Scanworks Worth £69.99.

AGFA
Flatbed USB Scanner
600 x 1200 dpi optical resolution.
MODEL: Snapscan 1212u.
WAS £149 **SAVE £20**
SALE PRICE
£129
FREE Page Scanworks Worth £69.99.

PLUSTEK
Flatbed Scanner
Includes transparency adaptor.
MODEL: P400 9036 Transparency.
WAS £169 **SAVE £20**
SALE PRICE
£149
FREE Page Scanworks Worth £69.99.

We won't be beaten on price**

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST COMPUTER SALE

SAVE UP TO £250 ON PCs



SAVE £100

OVER £500 WORTH OF SOFTWARE!
INTERNET READY
CYRIX MII 300 PROCESSOR

PACKARD BELL

Cyrix MII 300 Processor
32Mb RAM, 3.2Gb Hard Disk, 512k Cache memory, 32 x Multimedia, 4Mb Graphics*, 14" Colour Monitor, 56k Modem plus over £500 of software* including Windows 98, Word, Works, Encarta 98, GCSE Maths and English, Pingu, Actua Soccer 2, a selection of Internet software and more.
MODEL: Club 40

WAS £799 **SAVE £100**

PC WORLD SALE PRICE

£699

6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION†



OUR LOWEST EVER PRICED PC

PATRIOT

Cyrix MII 300 Processor
32Mb RAM, 2.1Gb Hard Disk, 512k Cache memory, 32 x Multimedia, 4Mb Graphics*, 14" Colour Monitor. Includes Windows 98.
MODEL: Patriot 300.

PC WORLD PRICE
INC VAT
£499
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION†

350MHz AMD K6-2 PROCESSOR
DVD-ROM DRIVE
8.4Gb HARD DRIVE

MERMAID

350MHz AMD K6-2 Processor
64Mb SDRAM, 8.4Gb Hard Disk, DVD-ROM Drive, 8Mb AGP Graphics, 15" Colour Monitor, 56k Modem, Windows 98.
MODEL: Neptune 350DVD.

WAS £999 **SAVE £100**

PC WORLD SALE PRICE

£899

6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION†



PACKARD BELL

350MHz Intel® Pentium® II Processor
64Mb (fast 100MHz) SDRAM, 3.2Gb Hard Disk, 512k Cache memory, 4 x DVD-ROM Drive, 8Mb 2 x AGP ATI Rage Pro Turbo Graphics, 56k Modem, 15" Colour Monitor and more. Includes over £1000 of software*. MODEL: 9350.

PC WORLD PRICE
INC VAT
£999
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION†

350MHz AMD K6-2 PROCESSOR
DVD-ROM DRIVE
8.4Gb HARD DRIVE

MERMAID

350MHz AMD K6-2 Processor
64Mb SDRAM, 8.4Gb Hard Disk, DVD-ROM Drive, 8Mb AGP Graphics, 15" Colour Monitor, 56k Modem, Windows 98.
MODEL: Neptune 350DVD.

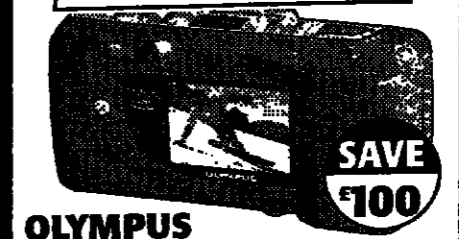
WAS £999 **SAVE £100**

PC WORLD SALE PRICE

£899

6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION†

SAVE UP TO £100 ON PERIPHERALS



OLYMPUS
Digital Camera
1024 x 768 max resolution.
MODEL: C-820L.
WAS £399 **SAVE £100**
SALE PRICE
£299



56k Internal Modem
Modular Technology
WAS £59.99 **SAVE £10**
SALE PRICE
£49.99



36x CD-ROM Drive
Creative Labs
Includes remote control.
WAS £59.99 **SAVE £10**
SALE PRICE
£49.99



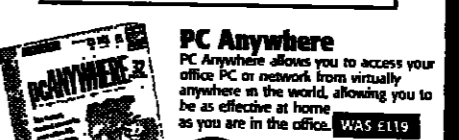
GRAPHICS ACCELERATOR
TechWorks Power 3D 128Mb
Wooded chipset and 128Mb RAM.
WAS £99.99 **SAVE £20**
SALE PRICE
£79.99



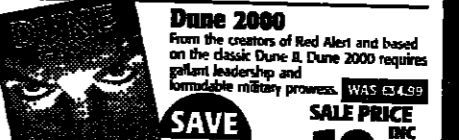
TRACKBALL
Microsoft IntelliMouse
Ergonomically shaped to fit the hand.
WAS £49.99 **HALF PRICE**
SALE PRICE
£24.99



RE-WRITEABLE CD RECORDER
Imation Packwriter 7200
2 x 2 x 6 speed.
WAS £249 **SAVE £50**
SALE PRICE
£199



DIGITAL CAMERA
Olympus C-800L
1024 x 768 max resolution.
WAS £399 **SAVE £100**
SALE PRICE
£299



PC Anywhere
PC Anywhere allows you to access your office PC or network from virtually anywhere in the world, allowing you to be as effective at home as you are in the office. WAS £119 **SAVE HALF PRICE**
SALE PRICE
£59.50



Dune 2000
From the creators of Red Alert and based on the classic Dune & Dune 2000 requires patient leadership and strategic military prowess. WAS £24.99 **SAVE £15**
SALE PRICE
£9.99



LEGO Island
Explore an amazing LEGO world in this unique learning adventure that kids will love. WAS £29.99 **SAVE HALF PRICE**
SALE PRICE
£14.99



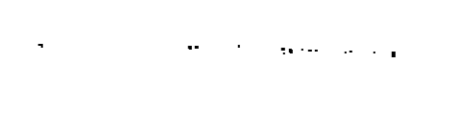
SmartStart French
WAS £19.99 **HALF PRICE**
SALE PRICE
£9.99



Dragon Dictate
WAS £39.99 **HALF PRICE**
SALE PRICE
£19.99



X-Files The Game
WAS £39.99 **SAVE £10**
SALE PRICE
£29.99



Dr. Solomon's AntiVirus
Tool Kit Plus Free Nets & Bells 98
WAS £79.99 **SAVE £30**
SALE PRICE
£49.99

STORES NATIONWIDE

FOR YOUR NEAREST STORE CALL

0990 464 464

STORES OPEN EVERYDAY

INCLUDING NEW YEAR'S DAY

(Except Scottish and York stores closed New Year's Day.
Barbican store closed 27th December, 1st, 2nd and 3rd January)

PC WORLD

THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

*We promise that if you find the same offer available at a lower price in any other local retail store within 7 days of purchase, we'll refund the difference guaranteed - provided you can produce your receipt and details of where you saw the offer.

†Based on current selling prices of actual or equivalent items (excluding disks and manuals for pre-installed software). Up to 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION. Account is interest free if repaid in full before the 12th monthly payment. Options are as follows: 9 months for products £700-£1299 inc VAT; 12 months for products only £1300 inc VAT. Typical example: Cash price £1500 inc VAT. 10% deposit of £150. 11 monthly payments of £145.84. Balance of £841.96 to be paid before or with the 12th payment. 0% interest. Total paid £1500 inc VAT. OR SPREAD THE COST WITH 48 MONTHS PAYMENTS. Typical example: Balance price £1500 inc VAT. 10% deposit of £150. 48 monthly payments of £45.64. Total amount paid £2390.72 inc VAT. All loans subject to status. No Deposit Credit Option available in store. Wapiti Credit quotations are available on request from: Dept. M/PCW, Midlands Avenue, Llanerisypennant, 1972 7PL. The Intel logo logo, Pentium, MMX and Celeron are registered trademarks of the Intel Corporation. *Inclusive to UK Retail List. **Shared cash main system memory. The AMD logo is a registered trademark of the AMD Corporation.

APR 29.5%

Teenager is found dead by air crew

THE BODY of 18-year-old Sally Greig was discovered by police yesterday, four days after she disappeared at the end of a Christmas party.

Police declined to say whether they were treating her death as suspicious until the post-mortem examination had been completed but there was speculation last night that she may have died from natural causes.

Ms Greig, a dental assistant from Perth, was last seen alive in the early hours of Christmas Eve after attending a party with work colleagues at the Huntingtower Hotel on the outskirts of town. Several witnesses who saw her later contacted police to say they had been concerned for her welfare. She was eventually found by a search team in an RAF helicopter yesterday lunchtime. Police had earlier shifted the area of their operation after being contacted by a witness. Ms Greig was formally identified by her parents yesterday afternoon.

At a press conference yesterday in Perth, Detective Superintendent Ian Watson said: "We can confirm that a body

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

was discovered at around midday in a field at Newbigging Farm, just outside Perth. An RAF helicopter was able to join the search because of a break in the weather and after an hour the crew spotted the body of a young female lying in a field.

"The body, which appears to have been lying there for some time, has not yet been identified but we have scaled down our search and we are awaiting the results of a post-mortem examination and until that happens we cannot say any more about the cause of death. I can say that her clothing was intact."

Det Supt Watson said a woman matching Ms Greig's description had been noticed walking alone along an unclassified road at about 12.30am on Christmas Eve by a local woman who was driving with her family. He said the driver had spoken to the young woman after becoming concerned that she was alone at such a late hour.

A spokeswoman for Tayside Police said: "Information received overnight has suggested that Sally may have wandered off along an unclassified road near to the Huntingtower Hotel."

Earlier her parents, Brian and Barbara, had spoken of their growing concern for their daughter. Mr Greig said: "We obviously want to find out Sally's whereabouts and if there's anything at all wrong for her to contact her mum or her dad or friends, relatives or the police - just for her to get in touch to assure everybody. "It's out of character for Sally to have done something like this, to have gone missing. So if anyone knows anything at all please come forward."

The family were being comforted by relatives last night.



Sally Greig: Witnesses were concerned for her welfare

Therapy trial for cannabis

TRIALS INTO the therapeutic uses of cannabis are to take place with the official approval of the Government.

The Medical Research Council stated yesterday it would be prepared to rush through funding for the trials, involving more than 1,000 people, provided the necessary legal clearance was obtained from the Home Office and the Medicines Control Agency, the Government's licensing authority for prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Protocols for the tests will be decided at a meeting on 11 January to be attended by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, the council and the Department of Health. The tests are expected to take place in the spring. The agency will advise the scientists on the legal and regulatory aspects of the trials.

The initial tests are expected to cost up to £500,000 each. A spokeswoman for the council said: "Rather than wait for our normal funding reviews we do have the necessary powers to expedite special payments as in the case of BSE and

BY KIM SENGUPTA

CJD. Obviously this will be dependent on the tests getting approval."

The trials are expected to look at spasticity in multiple sclerosis patients, chronic pain for dying cancer patients and acute pain in patients after operations. Multiple sclerosis sufferers will receive the currently used treatment for controlling muscle spasms, a second set will be given tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a cannabis derivative thought to have an anti-sickness effect and a third group will be given standard cannabis plant material. THC is not legally available in Britain. However, the Home Office and the council have agreed to authorise exemption to allow the trials to take place.

Last month the House of Lords backed the use of cannabis for medical use and recommended a change in the law after an eight-month inquiry. Last week the Prince of Wales asked a multiple sclerosis sufferer if she had tried cannabis for pain relief.

IN BRIEF

School security grant 'inadequate'

TEACHERS SAID £22m in grants to improve school security was "inadequate" yesterday. Ministers said the funds were for projects in 14,000 schools next year to pay for schemes such as new fencing, closed-circuit television and staff training. But the teachers' union NASUWT said most schools were still vulnerable to intruders.

Blind pensioner dies after robbery

POLICE RENEWED appeals yesterday for help to catch thieves after the death on Christmas Day of a deaf and blind 93-year-old woman who had been robbed a week earlier. Eileen Harvey died after her Christmas savings of £300 were stolen by tricksters from her home in Portsmouth, Hampshire.

'Nintendo thumb' warning

UP TO three million children playing computer games they were given at Christmas could end up with "Nintendo thumb". And youngsters surfing the Internet could face years of agony from bad posture and repetitive strain injury, said the charity, the Body Action Campaign.

سكرا من الاميل

Peregrines are fastest bird in world - official

PEREGRINE FALCONS diving on their prey are the fastest birds in the world, new research using radar has established.

The speed of their dive or "stoop" has been accurately measured for the first time by Swiss scientists, and has been shown to reach 115mph.

The figure is considerably lower than that given in many wildlife books, which say peregrines can attain 250mph, but this, and many other top speeds estimated for fast-flying birds, are now regarded as wildly exaggerated.

It still puts the peregrine well ahead of all its competitors. Its stoop kills prey such as ducks or pigeons outright by sheer impact.

The newly published studies accurately measured peregrines hurtling down at rates of up to 51 metres per second, which equates to 115mph.

Dr Matthias Kestenholz of the Swiss Ornithological Institute, one of the scientists who carried out the research, de-

BY BRIAN UNWIN

scribed that as representing "the highest air speed of a bird accurately measured so far".

The peregrines involved in the research were measured with tracking radar, considered to be the most accurate method. It works on the same principle as police radar guns and locks on to the bird to track its movements.

Peregrines can be seen more easily now in Britain than at any time this century. Although still classed as rare and endangered, there are now estimated to be more than 1,000 pairs - one of Europe's most thriving populations.

Owing to hunting earlier in the century and then the effects of pesticides accumulated from their prey, there were only about 360 pairs in the early 1960s, many of them failing to breed successfully. The recovery followed restrictions being placed on the use of pesticides and it has also been helped by round-the-clock watches of nesting sites to protect them from disturbance.

However, peregrines still suffer problems from nest-robbing, seeking their eggs for illicit collections or young birds for the lucrative overseas falconry trade.

FLIGHT TIMES

■ The eider, the coast-dwelling duck, has been found to reach a speed of about 47mph, followed by the Bewick's swan (45mph); the common crane and barnacle goose (42mph); the mallard (40mph); and the red-throated diver (38mph).

■ Swifts have been credited with rapid flight but their long, thin wings are not ideal for sustained speed. Common swifts, the species nesting in Britain, have been found to fly at just 25mph.



A peregrine falcon in a dive, during which it can reach 115mph

John Daniels

DEMONSTRATION CARRIED OUT AT BRNO RACETRACK, CZECH REPUBLIC, OCTOBER '95.

The New Generation Citroën Xantia. A perfectly balanced car.



It's not just the New Generation Xantia's self-levelling suspension that tips the scales in its favour. (A system further enhanced by the computer-controlled Active roadholding system which virtually eliminates body roll on the Xantia Active.) There are also many creature comforts and safety features to add weight to its claim as the best value family saloon on the road today. The Xantia LX is a prime example, with many standard features you won't find elsewhere. These include the innovative Traffic Master™ Oracle. A world first, it's a traffic warning system that keeps track of your position and direction. Should there be any risks or congestion ahead, Traffic Master™ will advise you in

the Xantia's stereo speakers. Its extensive safety package includes two front airbags and two further dual chamber lateral airbags to protect your head, neck and body from side impact. It also has ABS on all four disc brakes and automatic air conditioning to keep you alert and comfortable when driving. With programmed rear wheel steering to increase control and safety on corners, few cars can be as safe or pleasurable to drive. Xantia models start from just £13,720 on the road and are available with 0% finance over 3 years. It may be the perfectly balanced car, but weighing up the pros and cons can be a pretty head-scratching exercise. For more information, please call 0800 362 262.



CITROËN XANTIA
NOTHING MOVES YOU LIKE A CITROËN

XANTIA PRICES START FROM £13,920 ON THE ROAD FOR THE 1.6i SENSATION LIMITED EDITION. NEW GENERATION LX MODELS START FROM £16,666 ON THE ROAD. ON THE ROAD PRICES INCLUDE 8% FOR DELIVERY, NUMBER PLATES, 12 MONTHS' ROAD FUND LICENCE AND £26 GOVERNMENT REGISTRATION FEE. TYPICAL 3 YEAR FINANCE EXAMPLE BASED ON XANTIA 1.6 SENSATION: ON THE ROAD PRICE, £13,920. DEPOSIT (50%), £6,960. 36 MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF £186.92. TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE £13,920. CUSTOMER APR. 6%. FINANCE AVAILABLE TO OVER 18s ONLY AND SUBJECT TO STATUS. A GUARANTEE MAY BE REQUIRED. WRITTEN QUOTATIONS ON REQUEST FROM CITROËN FINANCE, VERNON HOUSE, SICILIAN AVENUE, LONDON WC1A 2DQ. FINANCE OFFER APPLIES TO RETAIL REGISTRATIONS OF CARS ORDERED AND REGISTERED BETWEEN 1.12.98 AND 31.3.99. LIMITED EDITION MODELS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. PRICES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

Blair

as central bankers buy the currency will increase deflationary pressures on European economies, though, as the rising exchange rate prices EU producers out of world markets.



Tony Blair: Seen as key counterbalance to French and German influence



Wim Duisenberg: Selected as continent's second most important person



The Pope: Named among the top four Europeans of influence



Mary Robinson: The highest placed out of only three women



Umberto Eco: 'Name of the Rose' author takes 20th place



Emma Bonino: Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid comes 17th

Blair voted the leading European

TONY BLAIR is the most important person in Europe, according to a survey by *The Independent* of some of the Continent's most powerful and influential people.

Somewhat surprisingly, given his failure to lead from the front in Europe, the Prime Minister is considered more influential than either Wim Duisenberg, head of the new European Central Bank, or Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor.

The survey also suggests that Mr Blair's influence should not be underestimated by either the French or Germans. Other European nationalities appear to see the Prime Minister as an effective counterbalance to their haste for European political integration. "He knocked some sense into Labour by his Third Way" said one of the judges, Hans Labohm, of the Netherlands Institute for International Relations.

The survey, thought to be the first of its kind, attracted replies from more than 200 government ministers, politicians, economists, industrialists, leading cultural figures, trade unionists and academics from

BY STEVE BOGGAN

the 15 countries of the European Union.

Overwhelmingly, the replies demonstrate that voters regard the politicians with the power to shape the Continent as its most important citizens.

Included in the top 10 are the Pope, the former German chancellor Helmut Kohl and Jacques Delors, former president of the European Commission who was described by John Monks, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, as "the most effective leader of the European Commission which became a highly creative secretariat".

They are followed by the German Finance Minister, Oskar Lafontaine; the French President, Jacques Chirac; the president of the Bundesbank, Hans Tietmeyer; and the Czech President, Vaclav Havel, who led the so-called "velvet revolution" in 1989. Swedish MEP Per Gahrton described him as "the only president who in office succeeded in preserving some of his dissident soul".

Lionel Jospin, the French Prime Minister, managed only 11th place, one ahead of the

media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, while joint Nobel Peace Prize winners John Hume and David Trimble from Northern Ireland came in at 13th.

Only three women made the top 25: Mary Robinson, the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, according to one judge "a fervent nationalist, highly respected", the European commissioner Emma Bonino and Gro Harlem Brundtland, director-general of the World Health Organisation.

Two Americans made the list - the world's most powerful man, President Bill Clinton and the most powerful industrialist, Bill Gates of Microsoft.

Not all nominees were industrialists or politicians. Artists, writers, musicians and sportspeople all featured on the fringes of "importance". The violinist Lord Menuhin took 25th place, edging out Baltasar Garçon, the Spanish judge seeking the extradition of the former Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet. Anita Roddick, founder of Body Shop, placed the judge at number one. "He is making human rights the inescapable issue it must be," she said.

Using a weighted voting sys-

CONTINENT'S TOP 25

1. Tony Blair, British Prime Minister
2. Wim Duisenberg, head of new European Central Bank
3. Gerhard Schröder, German Chancellor
4. The Pope
5. Helmut Kohl, former German chancellor
6. Jacques Delors, former president of European Commission
7. Oskar Lafontaine, German Finance Minister
8. Jacques Chirac, French President
9. Hans Tietmeyer, President, Bundesbank
10. Vaclav Havel, Czech President, led "velvet revolution"
11. Lionel Jospin, French Prime Minister
12. Rupert Murdoch, media tycoon
13. Mary Robinson, UN Commissioner for Human Rights
14. John Hume/David Trimble, Nobel Peace Prize winners
15. Jacques Santer, President, European Commission
16. Mikhail Gorbachev, former Soviet president
17. Emma Bonino, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid
18. Bill Clinton, US President
19. Bill Gates, head of Microsoft
20. Umberto Eco, Italian author
21. Javier Solana, Secretary-General of Nato
22. Gro Harlem Brundtland, director-general, World Health Organisation
23. Jose Maria Aznar, Spanish Prime Minister
24. Jürgen Schrempf, head of DaimlerChrysler
25. Lord Menuhin, violinist

tem, Mr Blair racked up 1,636 points, giving him a clear margin over his closest challenger Mr Duisenberg, with 1,580. Mr Schröder scored 1,182 points.

Leena Peltonen, Professor of Medical Genetics at the University of Helsinki, gave an insight into why so many found Mr Blair attractive. He is, she

said: "The counterbalance to German politics".

But it was not only politicians and bankers whom our voters considered "important". Among the more exotic nominees were the footballers Ronaldo and Zinedine Zidane, the author Salman Rushdie, the actress Juliette Binoche, Lara Croft, heroine of the computer game Tomb Raider, and the French techno band Daft Punk.

However, most entries which appeared at first sight to be frivolous were accompanied by lucid and rational explanations. For example, David Rock, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and one of several who nominated Lara Croft in their top 10, wrote: "Ms Croft, the first virtual star, represents the future of the entertainment industry. One should not let her physical non-existence count against her."

And Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, nominated the transvestite comedian Eddie Izzard because: "His love for all things Euro could be infectious for a cynical UK public."

Catherine Deneuve, the ac-

trix, appeared to attract a large number of votes on purely sexist grounds. Rolf-Dieter Krause of WDR radio in Germany, voted for her "For showing that even women of (some) age can be most attractive."

Giulio Andreotti, the former Italian Prime Minister, had Giorgio Armani at number two in his top 10, although he provided no explanation as to why. Gordon McVeigh, of the Cancer Research Campaign, put makers of Viagra at number one and the creators of Dolly the cloned sheep at number two, while the Danish trade union leader Rune Norgaard put Bono of U2 at number nine and comedian Ruby Wax at 10.

Among the bad guys named were the Serb President Slobodan Milosevic, the French National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen and Marc Dutroux, the Belgian child murderer.

Others who received votes but fell outside the top 25 included Professor Stephen Hawking and Richard Branson.

Perhaps disappointingly, voting patterns sometimes lived up to national stereotypes. Many Germans, for example, concentrated on industrialists and

politicians, while the French were more likely to include actors, artists and sportspeople among their nominees.

One child was nominated: Carl-Maurice Lafontaine, the baby son of Oskar Lafontaine, the German Finance Minister. He was chosen by Dr Christian Trippe of the German radio station Deutsche Welle, who wrote that Carl-Maurice was "the only person who can distract his father from destroying British lifestyle and eventually becoming German chancellor..."

■ *The Independent* wrote to opinion formers and policy makers in the 15 member countries of the European Union and the European Commission in Brussels, asking just one question: "Who in your opinion are the 10 most important people in Europe, ranked in order of importance?" After receiving 200 replies, we weighted the responses to reflect both the rankings and how often names appeared.

Research by Cathy Mayer, Ciar Byrne, Katherine Griffiths, Kerstin Fischer, Fernando Botera, James Cadman and Will Mandy.

our sale

Starts Today

1000's of great value offers

our price

Cher 'Believe'

£12.99 £9.99

Charlotte Church 'Voice of an Angel'

£12.99 £9.99

Celine Dion 'Let's Talk About Love'

£12.99 £9.99

Step by Step

£12.99 £9.99

New chart albums were £12.99 now only £9.99

New chart videos were £12.99 now only £9.99

Special Purchase: PlayStation games from £9.99

Selected products only. While stocks last. Prices correct at time of going to press and may vary in Northern Ireland.



The Iraqi poet Sajida Al-Musawi reading a poem next to a portrait of President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad yesterday

Iraq vows to fire on air patrols

IRAQ REITERATED its defiance of Western military action, saying yesterday it would fire on any warplanes patrolling over its territory.

The statement, referring to flights enforcing the United Nations-imposed "no-fly" zones against Iraqi aircraft in the north and south of the country, could be the start of a new round of confrontation between President Saddam Hussein's regime and British and US air power. The Ministry of Defence has warned that British aircraft will retaliate if attacked. US of-

BY JOHN DAVISON

ficials were giving the same message: "Iraq knows that it should not interfere with those flights, and our pilots can act in self-defence if they feel threatened at any time," a National Security Council spokesman said in Washington.

Two RAF Tornados, on patrol as part of Operation Southern Watch on Saturday morning, reported anti-aircraft fire five miles behind them. But this was not considered to be any threat and so no ac-

tion was taken. Iraq said it had fired at Western aircraft attacking a post in the south of the country and warned that it would shoot again at any warplane over its territory.

Its version of events was dismissed by both Britain and the US. It is understood that aircraft were again patrolling yesterday, but no incidents were reported.

Taha Yassin Ramadan, Iraq's vice-president, yesterday repeated that his government did not recognise the zones. Iraqi air defences would

"do what they can to confront this violation", he said. "The force of no-fly zones must end. The so-called no-fly zones only exist in the British and American imagination."

The US, Britain and France set up the no-fly zones under a UN mandate in 1991-92 to halt air attacks against Kurdish rebels in the north and Shia Muslim rebels in the south.

French aircraft are said to be reducing their involvement. Britain is represented by a dozen RAF Tornado GR1 jets based in Kuwait, which took

part in the four-day Operation Desert Fox bombardment of Iraq. Jaguar jets stationed at Incirlik, in Turkey, help to enforce the other zone, over northern Iraq.

Iraq has never recognised the zones and has occasionally confronted aircraft flying in the areas. The last big incident was in June. US officials said that a US F-16 fired a missile at an anti-aircraft site after Iraqi radar locked on to British planes on patrol.

Iraq denied its forces threatened the British aircraft.

Sierra Leone rebels march on Freetown

THE GOVERNMENT of Sierra Leone, restored with the help of British mercenaries, was in increasing danger last night as rebels threatened to attack the capital, Freetown, within days.

Fighting in the former British colony increased yesterday as rebel forces captured a town only 12 miles outside the capital. As tensions rose in the city a mob burnt alive at least two men accused of spying for the rebels.

Later today the British High Commissioner, Sir Peter Penfold, will meet West African heads of state in the Ivory Coast capital, Abidjan, to discuss the crisis and offer Britain's continued support for President Tejan Kabbah. It is understood that while Britain may offer "logistical" support it will not offer any military assistance.

The fight against the rebels is being co-ordinated by the Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Observer Group (Ecomog). The same coalition, aided by the mercenary firm Sandline, was responsible for restoring President Kabbah to power last February.

Ecomog has been reinforcing its forces in Freetown in anticipation of an attack from the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Sam Bockarie.

Yesterday Commander Bockarie said: "We are going to march into Freetown on New Year's Day... We have the will and the way."

"When we start shelling the city we won't stop," said Commander Bockarie. "It's too

late for talking and listening."

The rebels are believed to have taken control of Waterloo, a town 12 miles from Freetown. There was also heavy fighting yesterday in Makeni, 60 miles away in the centre of the country. Both sides claimed to have taken control of the town.

Ecomog forces said they had killed 60 rebels in bombing raids on RUF positions. An official at Ecomog's headquarters in Freetown said he expected Nigerian planes to go



into action again against rebels who had regrouped at the Makeni Teachers College on the southeastern highway to Magburaka.

The college is on the edge of the city and close to Ecomog's main military base in the north.

"Most of the civilians in Makeni and the surrounding area have fled so we are only left face-to-face with the rebels," said the official.

While it was impossible to verify the claims of either side, the presence of rebel troops so

close to Freetown indicates a swift reversal in the fortunes of Ecomog, which has been confidently and repeatedly predicting the demise of the RUF for the past 10 months. Mr Bockarie said his forces had killed at least 100 Nigerian troops.

At today's meeting Sir Peter will stress Britain's support of President Kabbah. The two men regularly met after the President was ousted.

"The meeting will attempt to assess the situation. Sir Peter will make clear our support for President Kabbah," said a Foreign Office spokesman.

Sir Peter was partly responsible for the involvement of Sandline in February's counter-coup, when arms and equipment were flown to Sierra Leone in breach of sanctions. Sandline's involvement triggered government inquiries into whether the mercenaries were encouraged to act by British officials. The company declined to comment yesterday.

President Kabbah was driven from power in May 1997 by Lieutenant-Colonel Johnny Koroma, who established a military junta with the RUF.

The President is refusing to talk to the rebels, who are demanding the release of their leader Foday Sankoh - currently imprisoned and appealing against a death sentence imposed for his role in ousting the President in May 1997.

The Foreign Office said about 50 British nationals remained in Sierra Leone. Some 81 British and other European nationals have been evacuated.

LOOKING FOR THE LOWEST SALE PRICES?

COMET SALE

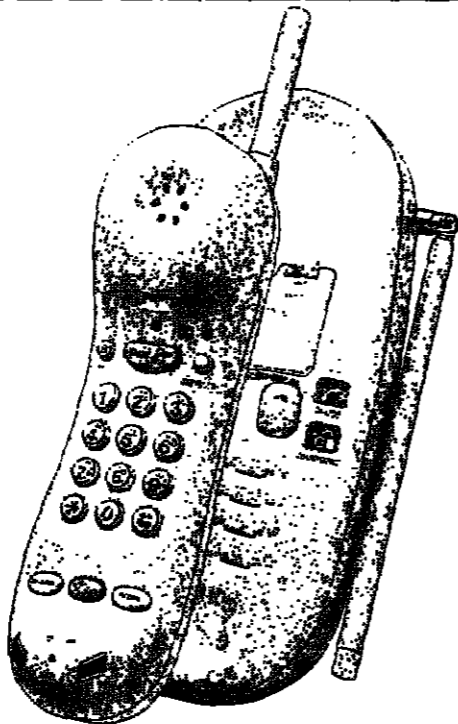
BT CORDLESS TELEPHONE

- 4 channel automatic selection
- 10 number memory
- Up to 250 metre range
- Paging facility

Model FREESTYLE 90 was £59.49

SAVE OVER £4

SALE £54.99



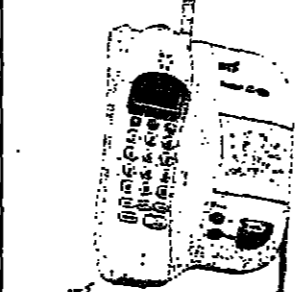
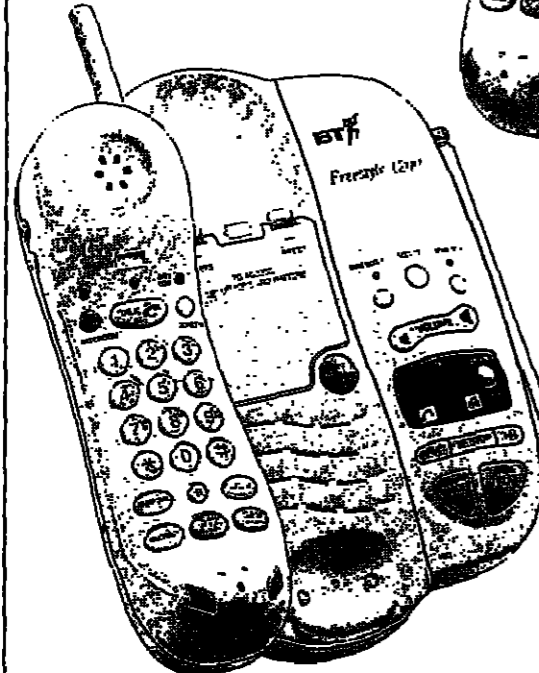
BT CORDLESS TELEPHONE WITH DIGITAL ANSWERING MACHINE

- 8 channel automatic selection
- 10 number memory
- Time & day stamp
- Remote access

Model FREESTYLE 1200 was £98.99

SAVE £9

SALE £89.99



BT CORDLESS TELEPHONE

- 8 channel auto selection
- 10 number memory
- Liquid crystal display

Model FREESTYLE 320 PLUS was £79.49

SAVE £9

SALE £69.99



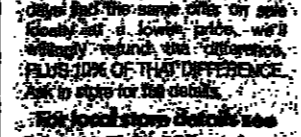
BT CORDLESS TELEPHONE WITH DIGITAL ANSWERING MACHINE

- 8 channel auto selection
- Intercom facility
- Remote access

Model FREESTYLE 1500 PLUS was £118.99

SAVE £9

SALE £109.99



BT DIGITAL CORDLESS TELEPHONE

- Exceptional sound and speech quality
- Up to 300 metre outdoor range
- Liquid crystal display

Model DIVERSE 2010 was £128.99

SAVE £10

SALE £119.99

Ski louts causing mayhem

MAYORS IN French mountain regions are demanding a crackdown on skiing "hooligans" after a series of serious injuries over the Christmas holidays and a disturbing rise in the number of accidents last year.

The mayor of Bresse in the Vosges wants gendarmes-on-ski for every slope. Several villages and towns in the French Alps have given the force of law to the "10 commandments" in the safety code of the international skiing federation. The tougher approach follows a 17 per cent increase in the num-

ber of accidents on the French slopes in the 1997-98 season.

There has also been a fracture-strewn opening to this season, attributed partly to new equipment, such as mono-skis and ski-boards.

But local officials and ski professionals also report a surge of bad and thoughtless behaviour. "We are in a time of everyone-for-themselves, of selfishness," said Jean-Louis Costerg, president of the

French association of ski-slope managers. "It's a social problem, which starts in the towns, not in the snow."

The stricter public tone was set by the deputy chief prosecutor in Albertville earlier this month, when he called for a three-month jail sentence for a teenager who collided with and killed a 10-year-old boy at Courchevel two years ago. "I intend to be very severe with everyone who thinks they can do whatever they please on the slopes," said René Ternoy. In the event, the court passed

a suspended sentence. Guy Varelaira, mayor of Bresse, a ski station in the Vosges, called for direct policing of the slopes on Saturday after four serious accidents in the last week.

The Prefect, or chief national government officer, in the Vosges département said he doubted it would be possible. The increase in injuries is attributed partly to the use of high-performance equipment by relative beginners. The sharpest increase in broken bones has been on the "easier" green and blue slopes.

IN BRIEF

Hostages' bodies identified

THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL of Chechnya confirmed yesterday that four bodies found in a forest on Christmas Day were those of telecoms engineers from Britain and New Zealand taken hostage and murdered in the region earlier this year. The severed heads of the men were found in west Chechnya on 8 December.

Barbados will go to the polls

THE PRIME MINISTER of Barbados, Owen Arthur, has called a general election on the Caribbean island nation for 20 January. Arthur said his ruling National Labour Party would run on its record of improving the economy. He pledged a "clean, vigorously contested poll" against the opposition Democratic Labour Party.

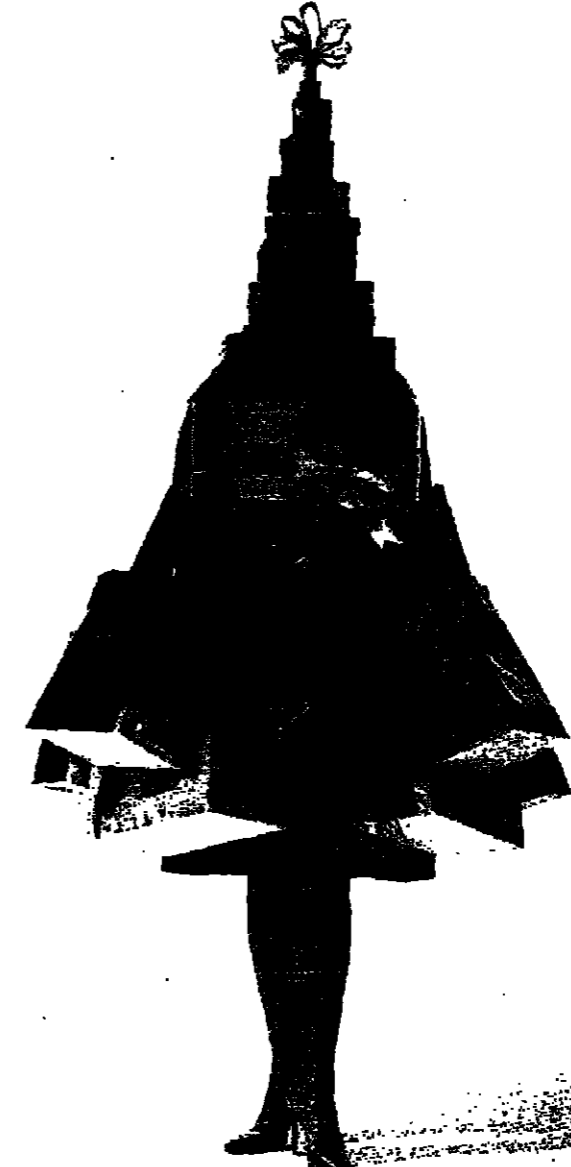
Aircraft crash blamed on Unita

ANGOLAN STATE radio yesterday accused Unita rebels of shooting down a United Nations plane carrying 14 people near a government-held town that Unita had been shelling for weeks. The C-130 transport plane crashed shortly after taking off from Huambo on Saturday.

Tennis racket killer's plea fails

AN APPEAL court in Kuwait has upheld the conviction of a Kuwaiti woman sentenced to 10 years in jail for beating to death her Asian maid with a tennis racket, the Arab Times reported.

TOTTENHAM CRT RD W1 KING'S RD SW3 TUNSGATE GUILDFORD



HEAL'S WINTER SALE
NOW ON

Where Japan's fat fish are sold to the fat cats

CITY LIFE
TOKYO

IT'S QUARTER to six in the morning, a few degrees above freezing, and I am standing in a dim shed on the edge of a murky quayside where a unique scene is being enacted.

Below the strip lights, groups of middle-aged men in overalls and rubber boots are prodding and pinching at hundreds of silvery-white objects lined up in rows across the concrete. They look like frosty torpedoes or mysterious pods from outer space. A thin steamy vapour rises from them, and there are yellow labels stapled to their fins.

At six o'clock exactly a bell is rung, and the din redoubles as everyone in the shed starts simultaneously shouting and gesticulating. Strings of numbers and names can be heard; a man with a pot of red goo moves among the silvery torpedoes and brushes an elegant character on to the side of each. They are deep-frozen

blue-fin tuna, the most esteemed of all Japan's many fish, and this is the daily auction at Tsukiji fish market, the place where sushi comes to die.

There is nowhere else quite like this in the world: in a good year 850,000 tonnes of fish – much of it still wriggling and thrashing – is hauled up on to the quayside on this eastern edge of Tokyo and laid out for auction in the shed alongside it. Like a medieval market, an entire community of suppliers has grown up around the trade, selling knives, hooks, boots, weighing scales, gloves and the tonnes of ice the market gets through every day. It is a spectacle of noise and colour, as aproned men drag carts bearing buckets of fish: the delicious, the repulsive and the

weird. But beneath the surface much has changed in Japan during the past year and Tsukiji, like the rest of the country, is in a state of anxiety.

In any recession, food is the last thing people stop buying and, as the world's greatest piscivores, there is no danger the Japanese are going to stop eating fish. By the standards of recent European slumps, or by the economic crisis devastating south-east Asia, the hardship here is difficult to pin down – for though the economic figures show an economy unquestionably in decline, Tokyo still looks and feels one of the most prosperous cities on earth.

The point is that Japan's fall has been from heights so lofty that they appear looking back,

like a dream. At the height of the famous Bubble Economy, the Japanese were spending at such a level that ideas of what was normal and sustainable were lost. The tuna sellers of Tsukiji were the beneficiaries, and then the victims, of this bizarre period.

Of all the elements of the auction, the most important part is that which precedes the opening of the bids – the poking and caressing of the fish by the tuna buyers. "You see, tuna are all different like people," says Osamu Takahashi, who has been doing the job for 16 years. "And it all comes down to the amount of fat."

The lean, red, tuna sells in the auction for as little as 1,000 yen (£5) a kilogram – even after the numerous middle men and transporters have added their mark up. This translates into something that the average family can afford to eat at home.



Tokyo fish market dealers inspecting the fish and putting their prices on them at auction Fujio Yokoyama/AP

But it is the pale, pink toro – with its layers of sweet marbled fat – which Mr Takahashi tries to identify and which, even to the wholesalers, costs 10,000 yen (£50) a kilo or more. Fatty blue-fin tuna – served

as sushi, rolled with rice, seaweed and even gold leaf – was the food of the Bubble Economy. It was consumed by executives on expense accounts and at top-class restaurants called ryotei. There an evening

of food and sake, served by hostesses, routinely cost a few thousand pounds. But in the recessions, expense accounts at the ryotei were the first luxuries to go.

"The prices are about the

same, but sometimes half the fish are unsold," says one Tsukiji stall-holder. "It's the politicians who used to go to the ryotei. They just aren't spending anymore."

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY

Activist jailed for leaks to radio station

BY PAUL ECKERT
in Peking

CHINA CONVICTED its fourth dissident in a week yesterday, jailing a veteran labour activist for 10 years for passing information on rural unrest to US-backed Radio Free Asia.

The court in central Hunan province also stripped Zhang Shanguang of his political rights for five years for telling a Radio Free Asia interviewer about farmers' protests, according to Human Rights in China, which is based in New York.

The Hunan Intermediate Court took 30 minutes after a trial lasting two hours and 20 minutes to sentence Zhang, who was escorted to the court building by a convoy of 20 police vehicles.

The sentencing of Zhang follows the jailings of three founders of a banned opposition party and the issue of an anti-subversion decree in line with an order by President Jiang Zemin that all threats to stability be "resolutely nipped in the bud".

Zhang's case "clearly shows that the second wave of repression of democracy activists will soon get underway", the Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China, which is based in Hong Kong, said in a

statement. On Friday, court officials confirmed that Zhang would be the subject of a closed-door trial yesterday. According to Human Rights in China, Zhang was accused of "illegally providing intelligence to overseas enemy organisations and people".

In an interview with Radio Free Asia in March, Zhang spoke of a demonstration in Hunan's Xupu county by about 80 farmers against excessive taxes and another protest that resulted in fatal violence.

China views Radio Free Asia, which is funded by the US government, as hostile to communist rule and blocks its broadcasts. In June, Peking refused to grant visas to Radio Free Asia reporters to cover President Bill Clinton's visit. Peking has also lobbied other countries not to let the network set up transmission stations on their territory.

Zhang, who served seven years in prison for a previous conviction based on his role in pro-democracy demonstrations in 1989, is the fourth opposition figure to receive a lengthy sentence in the year-end crackdown on dissent. (Reuters)

0% FINANCE* AND 1 YEAR'S FREE INSURANCE*

THE NEW CLIO GRANDE

IS SMALL WHERE IT COUNTS.

WITH POWER STEERING,

REMOTE CENTRAL LOCKING

AND A SUNROOF.

IT'S BIG WHERE IT COUNTS, TOO.

SIZE MATTERS

0%



For more information or a test drive
call 0800 52 51 50 or www.renault.co.uk

The New Clio

sale

SHARP PD-1
The world's first digital camcorder with touch LCD screen.
✓ 40x digital zoom
✓ DVI output
✓ 4" touch LCD screen
✓ Digital image stabilization
Originally £1299.99

£799.99 £220 off accessories kit

PENTAX Espio 140
Top-rated 38-140mm zoom camera
at new low price
Orig. RRP £299.99

£149.99

Quantum VHS Tape
E-180V 3-hour high grade tape. RRP £1.99

1/2 PRICE Kodak Film
36-exp ISO 200 35mm colour film. RRP £2.99

Duracell AA Batteries
4x AA Alkaline batteries. RRP £3.99

SONY Mavica
3.5" floppy disk based camera at an outstanding price
SRP £499.99
Was £399.99

£249.99

Free catalogue!

0800-038 8899

Tecno
PHOTO • VIDEO • DIGITAL

• BELFAST • BIRMINGHAM • BRIGHTON • BRISTOL • BROMLEY • CAMBRIDGE
• CARDIFF • CHESTER • COVENTRY • DUNDEE • DUNFERMILINE • DUNDEE
• GLASGOW • GLASGOW • GLASGOW • GLASGOW • GLASGOW • GLASGOW
• LONDON • LONDON • LONDON • LONDON • LONDON • LONDON
• MANCHESTER • MANCHESTER • MANCHESTER • MANCHESTER • MANCHESTER
• NEWCASTLE • NEWCASTLE • NEWCASTLE • NEWCASTLE • NEWCASTLE
• NOTTINGHAM • NOTTINGHAM • NOTTINGHAM • NOTTINGHAM • NOTTINGHAM
• PETERBOROUGH • PETERBOROUGH • PETERBOROUGH • PETERBOROUGH • PETERBOROUGH
• SHEFFIELD • SHEFFIELD • SHEFFIELD • SHEFFIELD • SHEFFIELD
• SOUTHAMPTON • SOUTHAMPTON • SOUTHAMPTON • SOUTHAMPTON • SOUTHAMPTON
• WATFORD • WATFORD • WATFORD • WATFORD • WATFORD

PICTURES OF THE YEAR

From the horror of wars, the emotion of the World Cup or the simple pleasures of family holidays, this newspaper was home to the most distinctive images of the past 12 months. Here, on the next four pages, are some of the most striking



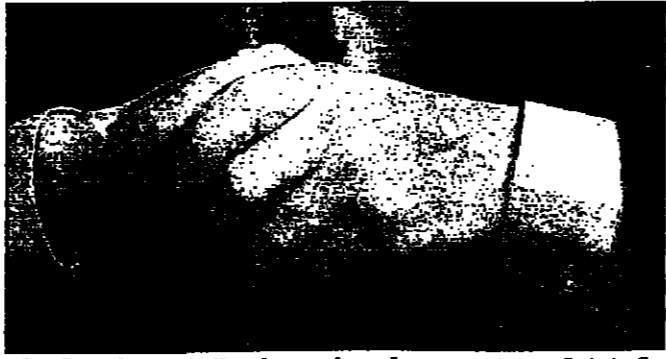
'It was quite simply devastation on an epic scale,' remembered David Rose of 'The Independent', who photographed this astonishing scene at the Choluteca River in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch ripped through the Caribbean and Central America last month. Homes, hillsides and people were swept away as the hurricane tore apart the countryside. Mitch was the fourth worst hurricane on record and claimed up to 20,000 lives in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador



For a photograph to illustrate a feature on Britons who holiday at home, Tom Pilston of 'The Independent' travelled to Skegness for this timeless scene of family chaos and simple fun. 'It was a July day and - suitably enough - the weather was pretty overcast,' he said



David Rose found this family of Albanian Kosovars fleeing the Serbs along a deserted road last February. He said: 'There was no one for miles around and I felt quite invasive, but it was so important I felt I had to take the photograph'



The day after Ron Davies resigned as secretary of state for Wales he held a photo-call for the Welsh media. Freelancer Brian Jarrett of the Huw Evans Picture Agency captured the tell-all 'Sorry' scribbled on the politician's hand. 'It seemed to sum up everything,' he said

Austin Reed

WINTER SALE

UP TO 50% OFF

SELECTED MENSWEAR

pure cotton shirts	£39.95	£19.95
pure wool jackets	£199.00	£99.50
pure wool suits	£299.00	£149.00

SELECTED WOMENSWEAR

luxury knitwear	£49.95	£24.95
pure wool skirts & trousers	£99.00	£49.50
pure wool tailored jackets	£279.00	£139.00

NOW ON

FOR YOUR NEAREST BRANCH. CALL 0800 585479



On 7 August, terrorist bombs exploded at the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, attacks that were to result in retaliatory air strikes by America against alleged targets in Sudan and Afghanistan. A total of 224 people were killed by the embassy bombs and more than 5,000 were injured. 'When we heard there had been an explosion I went straight away - I just ran down there,' said Khalil Senosi of the Associated Press Nairobi bureau. 'It was chaos. It was difficult to work because there were so many people there trying to help'



Above: Young, white, male aggression killed Stephen Lawrence and its ugliness was defined in this moment captured by Paul Hackett of Reuters. The five men, accused by one newspaper of murdering the black teenager, lashed out at those taunting them outside the public inquiry they had to be forced to attend and whose questions they refused to fully answer.

Left: John Edmonds, president of the TUC, was having a laugh during a photo-opportunity at the annual conference in September. He wasn't laughing after John Voos of 'The Independent' took this picture, which he felt made him look silly. 'I overheard him the next evening threatening to kill the photographer who took it,' Voos recalled.



Just because each had once led the party did not necessarily mean Baroness Thatcher and Sir Edward Heath were interested in everything being said at the Conservative Party conference, as Paul Bates of Reuters discovered. Perhaps those Ikea chairs were just a little too comfortable



The Scottish team may not have been the greatest footballers at France 98 but their fans were certainly among the most high-spirited. Brian Harris, chief photographer of 'The Independent', came across this bunch celebrating scoring a goal in a friendly kickabout in the shadow of the most famous monument in Paris



THINK BIG

SAVE
UP TO **£350** INC. VAT
IN THE TINY
SALE
WITH NOTHING TO PAY
UNTIL THE YEAR 2000

Home Studio™ Plus System with Intel® Pentium® II Processor 400MHz

512K CPU Cache

128MB Fast SD RAM 100MHz

8.4GB Ultra DMA IDE Hard Disk Drive

15" SVGA .28 Colour Monitor

8MB AGP 3D Accelerated
Graphics Card

DVD ROM Drive
compatible
with CD

Creative Labs Soundblaster 64 WaveTable
Integrated Sound plus Tiny CPR50
Stereo Speakers

Olympus 1000L Digital
Camera & Imaging Editing Software

Epson Stylus 640 Colour Printer

Flatbed Colour Scanner

Joystick

Voice Fax/Modem V.90 56Kbps

Free Trial BT LineOne Internet Access

Microsoft® Intellimouse

Free Microsoft®
Windows® 98
Interactive
Tutorial Software

Windows® 98

Over £430 of
Microsoft
and Other
Software.
Plus 4 DVD Titles

was ~~£1799~~
~~£1799~~
NOW **£1499**
~~£1799~~



WAS ~~£799~~
NOW **£749**

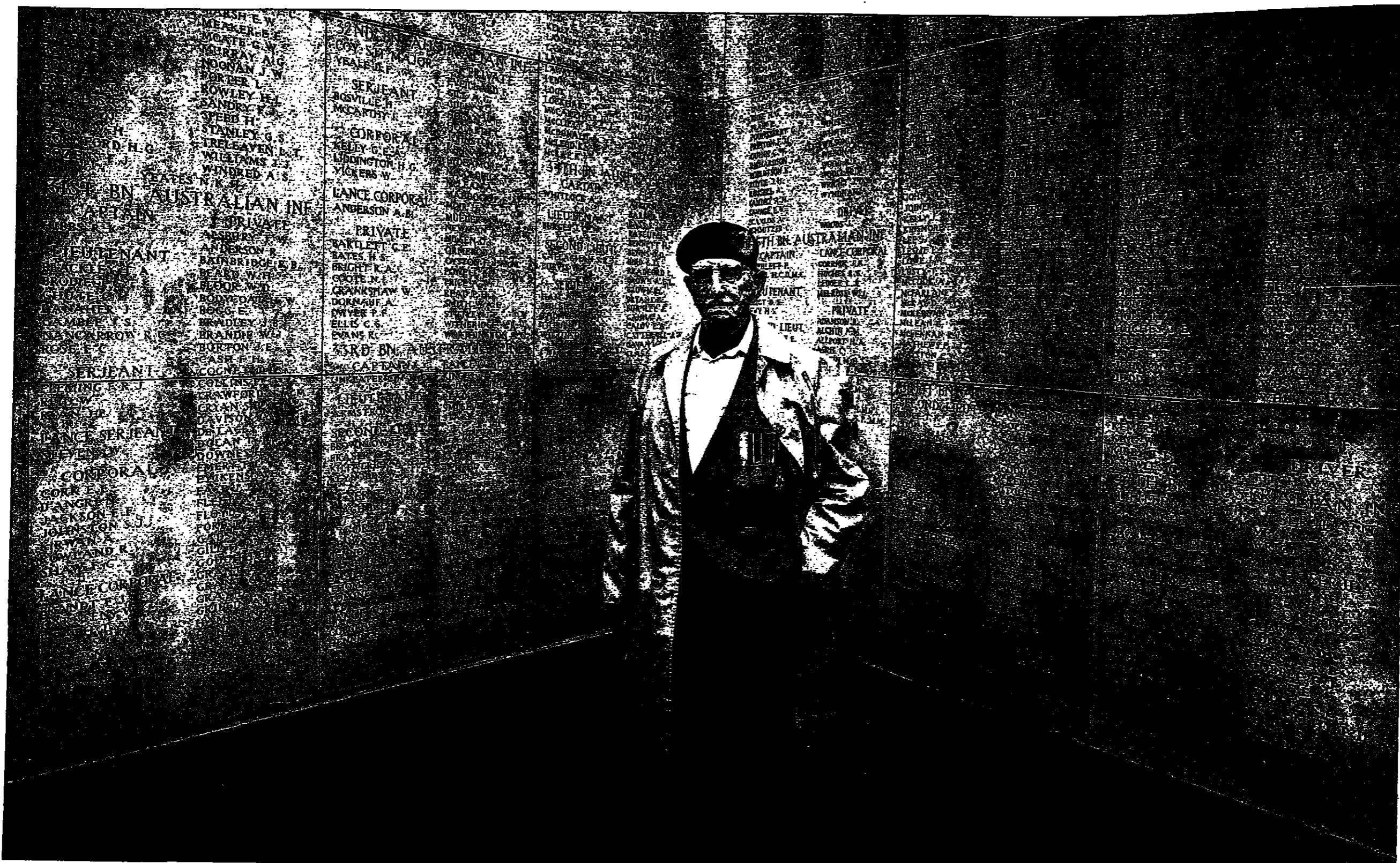
CITY

THINK BIG ABOUT YOUR PC. THINK tiny

0% NOTHING TO PAY UNTIL THE YEAR 2000 - NOT EVEN A DEPOSIT
HOME STUDIO PLUS SYSTEM - PC cash price £1801.28 inc. Delivery £34.00 + VAT @ 17.5%; England & Wales mainland only.
Pay whole balance on or before the payment date interest free. Alternatively pay 36 monthly payments of £89.74. Finance subject to status.
APR 26.9% Interest calculated from day one of the agreement. Written quotations upon request. Financial amount payable £2320.64

26.9%
APR

Computer Buyer
November 1998



The night before the 80th anniversary of the end of the First World War, Brian Harris met Robbie Burns, a veteran, in a hotel bar at Ypres. He was just two days from his 104th birthday but the former member of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders agreed to be photographed at the Menin Gate memorial. 'I didn't want to make a compromise picture that had no dignity,' said Harris. 'In Mr Burns, I found someone who encapsulated everything'

AN EXTRA 10% OFF SALE PRICES
MUST END SATURDAY



HALF PRICE SALE

PLUS FREE FULLY
INTEGRATED DISHWASHER*
worth £619
WHEN YOU SPEND OVER £3,500

OR FREE AMERICAN
FRIDGE FREEZER**
worth £899
WHEN YOU SPEND OVER £6,500

Fantastic savings on the entire Magnet range of kitchen and bedroom cabinets, and that's not all. We'll also give you a service that's second to none. Plus, we're offering an optional stainless steel dynamic drawer system on most kitchens and a wide range of worktops including solid granite and corian. Add to this some great deals on **ORF** and **Whirlpool** appliances and you'd have to agree that no one else offers as much. But then no one else offers kitchens that are designed for living, built for life. Your life.

CALL 0800 192 192

For details of your nearest showroom. Please quote reference IN1414
OPEN SUNDAY 10am-4pm**

Magnet

Designed for living BUILT FOR LIFE

www.magnet.co.uk

FREE 3D COLOUR DESIGN AND PLANNING SERVICE

10 YEAR GUARANTEE ON OUR UNIQUE RIGID CARCASSES

EXPERT FITTING BY MASTER INSTALLERS

FLEXIBLE PAYMENT SCHEMES AVAILABLE

*Kitchens shown: Mon 26th Dec 10am-5pm, Tue 29th Dec 10am-5pm, Fri 1st Jan 10am-5pm (England and Wales) 9am-5pm (Scotland), Sat 3rd Jan 10am-5pm, Mon 4th Jan 10am-5pm. Selected stores may be closed on 26th Dec. Please check with branch for details.
**This offer is valid in all Magnet showrooms at prices charged between 2nd Nov and 2nd Dec 1998. When you spend £3,500 on a kitchen purchase including installation, sink, worktop, island unit, Whirlpool AFR15 or 2000 series, you will receive a free American fridge freezer (worth £899) or a free integrated dishwasher (worth £619) or a free American fridge freezer (worth £899) or a free integrated dishwasher (worth £619). Offer ends 2nd Dec 1998.

SPORT

Return to France 98: Both the hosts and the Caribbean outsiders have benefited from the World Cup effect

The boom that followed the glory

THE OPTIMISTS said the French victory in the World Cup would change everything, the pessimists said it would change nothing. Politically, the jury may still be out. (On the whole, the verdict is likely to be positive.)

In sporting terms, there is no argument. France has gone football mad. Six months after "les hommes d'Alain Jaquet" defeated Brazil 3-0 at St Denis, France is running out of room in its stadia to fit would-be fans: it is running out of football pitches to accommodate would-be players. The average crowd in the French First Division this year, up to the winter pause, was 18,959.

In the same period last year, it was 15,780. This is an increase of more than 20 per cent. Crowds in the Second Division - previously a contradiction in terms - are also up by one fifth, averaging just under 6,000. Even more encouragingly for the future of football in France, junior leagues and clubs have been besieged by youngsters, and some not so young, wanting to play the game played by Zinedine Zidane.

The new recruits are pouring in so rapidly that the Fédération Française de Football has not officially counted them all yet. But the best guess is that another 240,000 French people have joined football clubs since the World Cup - an increase of about 12 per cent.

Many thousands of these recruits come from the troubled suburbs of the larger French cities. In the Ile-de-France, the greater Paris region, new players are joining at a rate of 250 a day. Hamar, a 33-year-old youth worker and voluntary football coach in the eastern suburbs of Paris, said: "As far as the kids around here remember it, France did not win the World Cup. Zinedine Zidane won the World Cup. To see a man who comes from the same background as them - it is not even just a question of race - leading the French team to victory opened these kids' eyes. Everyone wants to be a footballer now."

This is even true in the south west, the home of Didier Deschamps, Bixente Lizarazu, Christophe Dugarry and Fabien Barthez but also traditionally the home of both codes of rugby. The French rugby federation admits that it has been steadily losing young players to football since the World Cup - especially in its south-western fiefdom. France, compared to Britain, is already well endowed with municipal football pitches, even in the most remote rural areas. But abruptly there is a shortage of spaces to play on. In Brittany, and

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

in parts of the Paris region, teams are stacking up on Saturday and Sunday afternoons to occupy the same piece of grass. In the Rhône-Alpes region, handball pitches have been commandeered for five-a-side football games. There is talk of launching a public campaign - "operation 1,000 terrains" - to build 1,000 new football fields.

There is an equivalent problem at the top of the football pyramid. Apart from the grounds rebuilt for the World Cup, French stadia are relatively small. With the boom in interest, many clubs are operating at or near to capacity. The World Cup victory accelerated, rather than reversed, a trend. Crowds had already been growing steadily in recent years.

This season all clubs have benefited from the Zidane-Jaquet effect - save one. Paris St-Germain, the wealthiest club in French football, packed with highly paid but perennially under-achieving stars, are finally losing their long-suffering fans. Financially, French professional football - although continuing to groan about the unfair tax burdens it faces - is in healthy condition. Six years ago the professional clubs made a combined loss of £120m per year; they expect, on the half-time results, to make a modest profit of around £5m this year.

On the field, the French best are competing with Europe's best on more or less equal terms. Three French clubs - Marseilles, Bordeaux and Lyons, also leading the championship in that order - made it through to the last eight of the UEFA Cup for the first time. (Lens gallantly failed to qualify for the final stages of the Champions' League; PSG abjectly crashed out of the Cup-Winners' Cup). But an ambitious new breed of football club presidents, led by Gervais Martel of Lens, believes that the French clubs must now use the springboard of France 98 to catch up permanently with the Premiership and Serie A.

Martel is campaigning for a much better tax regime for professional clubs, and their players. He also wants French TV channels to pay a much greater fee for televising matches when the present deals run out in two years' time. The aim, he says, should be to ensure that Zinedine Zidane - and the future Zidanes now squeezing on to pitches all over France - should win international trophies with French clubs as well the French team.



In the shadow of the Arc de Triomphe, football fans start the Paris party after the French team won the World Cup on home soil in July

Reuters

Rise of the 'Reggae Boyz' inspires island harmony

BY SALLY JONES

"EVER SINCE we qualify for the World Cup, football has taken the front of everything," murmured Walter "Pearl" Boyd, the erstwhile bad boy of Jamaican football, with a grin. "Now it's nothing but kids where juggling a ball every minute of every day. Even the school books are full of football - that's the main thing to make them learn."

Almost a year on from the ecstatic moment when Jamaica's team, mainly composed of talented part-timers, qualified for the World Cup finals for the first time in the island's history, football is bigger than ever. It provides a hefty morale boost, a vital element of unity in this notoriously volatile and factional society and a fillip to Jamaica's flagging economy, hard hit by the decline of the Far East.

Despite Boyd's well-publicised rows with Rene Simoes, Jamaica's technical director, over his cavalier attitude to time-keeping and training sessions, the Reggae Boyz' World Cup run has made his name and his fortune, although he also acknowledges laconically that it has brought "girl trouble, man".

With the whole island in ferment, Simoes threw him out of the squad for indiscipline in the run-up to the event and even the Prime Minister, P.J. Patterson, begged for his reinstatement. Boyd bought an airline ticket and flew, weeping, to New York to implore the Brazilian to give him back his place.

"My mother said I couldn't sleep in the house until I apologise to Rene and get back in the team," the 26-year-old confessed sheepishly in the darkness of the cluttered parlour of his family's tiny breeze-block bungalow in the working-class Kingston suburb of Nanny Town. His persistence paid off and, although not in the starting line-up for the France matches in France, he came on as a substitute in all three games. Back home, Boyd, is delighted at

the peace which his side's success brought to warring factions within the city. Earlier this month he scored the winner for the national side in a friendly against a team combining the top players of two Premier Leagues teams from some of the toughest areas in Kingston - Arnett Gardens and Tivoli Gardens, traditionally bitter rivals whose joint participation would have been unthinkable until now. Four years ago, a fixture between the two, played for

violence-free elections in living memory.

"The Reggae Boyz caught everyone's imagination," Simoes recalled. "They were the Cinderella team, mainly amateurs - bell-boys, truck drivers, who became the first country to qualify without money or modern facilities."

"When I arrived in 1994 I refused to accept the widespread idea that Jamaicans were lazy and wouldn't work, and they proved that if you had a dream, trained hard and played as a team, you could topple sides with

just donated a set of football strips to the newly formed team of a community school on a patch of waste ground in Trench Town.

The children, most with literacy problems and from chaotic, dirt-poor backgrounds, talked of the thrill they felt at their own links with the national side. "We are so proud of the Reggae Boyz," stammered 14-year-old Michael Reed, the team captain. "Professor Simoes brought us pictures of the team and gear, which uplift our spirits."

At senior level more companies are offering sponsorship to align themselves with the national side's success and under a new Adopt-a-Player scheme, major firms such as Texaco and Rent-a-Car are helping to fund the national squad's salaries. Playing standards are rising with only certified coaches allowed to train sides in the top two leagues. Until now these have been amateur but plans are afoot for a professional league of the leading 10 sides within two years.

The island's economy has also benefited despite the recession. The national carrier, Air Jamaica, flew in seven per cent more visitors this year than over the same period in 1997, while Sandals, the all-inclusive hotel chain, has seen the numbers of holiday makers go up by more than three per cent.

Oliver Foot, of Air Jamaica and the son of the island's last British governor, attributes this in part to the boost the World Cup gave to morale. "The Reggae Boyz' impact has been tremendous," he said. "It has helped unify Jamaican society and altered its old violent image."

Simoes is realistic about the challenges ahead but elated by the progress so far. "What we need now are imaginative policies, better education, more jobs," he said, "but the hope and self-belief and discipline are starting to show. The Reggae Boyz are the best ambassadors Jamaica could have."



Jamaica's Walter Boyd (left) against Argentina

Allsport

security reasons on the Jamaican Defence Force field, was abandoned after a near riot and a shooting in the crowd.

Earlier this month the two met again in a showcase "peace game" played with the utmost good humour, rival supporters walking together for the first time in 25 years through once-violent feud-ridden sections of ghettos such as Trench Town. There was scarcely a scuffle, in the latest example of the new-found unity and sense of national pride that in December produced the first

big money and big-name stars. All the same we had so little infrastructure lower down that capitalising on the Boyz' success was like trying to build a house from the roof downwards. The team have remained folk heroes and in huge demand for public appearances and good works. Most donate a proportion of their fees to charity and last week they endorsed a rubella project by undergoing a televised vaccination. Simoes, a deeply religious man, insists that his stars stay in touch with the ghettos where several played their first football. He has

Gamblers and Christians united in name of sport

Start of Play: The Curious Origins of our Favourite Sports
By Jonathan Rice
Pion, £14.99, hardback

BOOK OF
THE WEEK

IN 1907, eight years after his finest hour, Vere Thomas St Ledger Gould was apprehended with his wife at Nice railway station in possession of two trunks which were found to contain the remains of a Danish widow suspected by Mrs Gould of having an affair with her husband. He remains the only Wimbledon finalist to end his life on Devil's Island.

It is exotic episodes like this that make *Start of Play* such an absorbing read. Rice sifts through the early traces - Julius Caesar kicking a skull across the River Brent, Indians playing polo with human heads wrapped in muslin, the charge against Mary Queen of Scots that immediately her second husband breathed his last, she repaired sharply to the golf course - then devotes a chapter to each of the major ball games. There is not much in the way of Americana, but then as the word "our" in the subtitle suggests, this is a record of Britain's unique historical contribution to world sports.

It is difficult to pin down absolute beginnings - versions of football and golf were played everywhere, for example. So the book concentrates on the last couple of hundred years, and particularly those intensely productive few decades of the last century when sports were organised and codified, the forces of privilege planting their flags and making sure the peasants were kept out of the loop.

As usual when sport is involved, the story is sometimes venal, sometimes glorious (but mostly venal). Gambling was often the spur for development - even the original *raison d'être* of professional cricket, whose ranks swelled from 20-strong in 1840 to 500-plus in 1860, was to please the punters (tennis, the modern version of which was born in the back gardens of the bourgeoisie, was an exception).

Later, the proponents of an empire based on muscular Christianity took over, asserting their moral superiority over the money-grubbers. All the Victorian sporting

pioneers, Rice notes, were of the ruling classes, though for him they were unwitting revolutionaries as well, setting in motion "huge forces for social change".

With respect to Rice, the academic bit should be left to the academics - he is on his shakiest ground when attempting grand conclusions, painting with a broad brush. His skill is as a miniaturist, ferreting out the colourful details.

There is a succession of fascinating firsts and fabulous facts, for example - the first international (Scotland v England at golf 1681), the first cricket tour to be cancelled for political reasons (1789 - guess why), John Wisden's 10 clean-bowled wickets in an innings. And every chapter is embellished with deft characterisation and a lightness of touch that makes for easy reading.

Rice had a good idea and has executed it well. Major Walter Clifton Wingfield had one good idea - sphairistike, the precursor of modern tennis. But, as Rice says, he "moved on to other things; one of his later books was entitled *Bicycle Gymkhana*."

One wishes Rice better luck with his future projects.
CHRIS MAUME

THIS WEEK'S TOP TEN SPORTS BOOKS

- 1 *Angry White Pyjamas*, Robert Twigger (Indigo, paperback, £5.99).
- 2 *Addicted*, Tony Adams with Ian Ridley (Collins Willow, hardback, £16.99).
- 3 *Bleak and Blue - 22 Years at the Manchester Academy of Football Farce*, Craig Winstanley (Sigma, paperback, £8.95).
- 4 *European Football Yearbook 1998-99*, edited by Mike Hammond (Sports Projects, paperback, £23.95).
- 5 *Winter Colours - Changing Seasons in World Rugby*, Donald McRae (Mainstream, hardback, £16.99).
- 6 *Elliot's Golf Form 1999*, Keith Elliott (Portway Press, paperback, £20.00).
- 7 *Turning Point*, Sean Fitzpatrick and Duncan Johnstone (Penguin, hardback, £18.99).
- 8 *Jenny Fitzman - The Autobiography* (Partridge, hardback, £16.99).
- 9 *Playing at Home*, John Aizlewood (Hallamshire Press, hardback, £16.99).
- 10 *Annuario del Calcio Mondiale 98-99*, Salvatore Lo Presti (SET, hardback, £19.95).

List compiled by Sportspages, 94-96 Charing Cross Road, London (0171 240 9604) and St Ann's Square, Manchester (0161 832 8530), and www.sportspages.co.uk

Gloves off as Stewart strikes back

TO KEEP or not to keep has been a perennial question asked of Alec Stewart. On a cold windy day more reminiscent of Manchester in April than Melbourne in summer, the answer was emphatically delivered. Dispensing with wicket-keeping gloves and returning to open the innings, Stewart scored his first Test century against Australia. He now has a Test hundred against every Test playing nation save India.

If it was not overly cheery news for England - they still managed to lose their last seven wickets for 70 runs - it was good news for wicket-keepers. For now, the vacancy is being filled by Warren Hegg, a decision Stewart claimed was made 40 minutes before the scheduled start on Boxing Day morning, after Alex Tudor pulled up lame with a sore hip.

"Playing Alex was an attempt to be positive," Stewart said. "When he wasn't fit, I wanted to do something that appeared to be attacking, so I moved up to opening and gave Hegg the gloves. If Tudor had played, I'd definitely have kept wicket."

Stewart, however, has never made any secrets about preferring to open the innings. "I've kept wicket in order to give us options whether it be five bowlers or, as has tended to happen here, seven batsmen. Obviously I'm not saying I'll never keep wicket again, or that I won't open again, just that I'll always try and do what the selectors feel is best for the side. Obviously, if we'd have done well, I'd have kept all series."

But England have done far from well, especially in the Tests completed, and taking on

CRICKET

BY DEREK PRINGLE
in Melbourne

England 270
Australia 59-2

three jobs (keeping, batting and captaincy) against a side as combative as Australia, was always going to require one glowing CV too many.

If the theory looked sustainable, the practical has proved otherwise, and against these opponents, this, as the following figures prove, was a compromise too many.

As a keeper/batsman in Tests, Stewart has batted 76 times, scored 2,310 runs, with three centuries at an average of 33.47. When unencumbered by the gloves, that increases to 3,584 runs from 77 innings at an average of 48.78, including nine hundreds.

Mind you, Stewart's shedding of the gloves is not the only strategic pillar likely to be abandoned. Apparently David Lloyd, the coach, has intimated that he will resign after the World Cup, three months before his contract is up.

Lloyd has been under pressure this tour, but he is no more culpable than anyone else involved in management, and probably a great deal less than most of the players, who come to him the products of a flawed system. In fact, aside from the occasional ill-timed outburst, he has made sure his players have received every available tool to improve their game. With him as coach, England have not wanted for energy and ideas and he should not allow himself to be pushed.

Stewart's achievement on a two-paced pitch that had spent the entire first day of the match under covers was not without its uncertainty and fortune. Apparently, damp spots had formed under the covers and ground staff were up with the larks to dry them with giant blowers. Despite the last-minute cosseting to the pitch, the new ball was always likely to move about. Re-united with Michael Atherton, he quickly lost his partner for a duck in the opening over of the day.

Atherton is having a luckless series and, judging by the glare he gave the umpire Steve Bucknor, and the ensuing shake of the head, he obviously felt that he had not edged the leg-cutter Glenn McGrath had bowled him. TV replays, if not categoric in supporting the batsman's ire, did not confirm the edge either.

It got worse in McGrath's next over when Stewart, having seen his old partner depart, then lost his brother-in-law for a duck as well. Despite his century in the opening Test, Mark Butcher has looked well short of his best and he was well caught off bat and pad by Justin Langer at short leg, a dismissal that owed much to his tentative footwork.

Having begun streakily, his first two opening shots were boundaries off edges that might easily have gone to hand, Stewart continued to score at a cracking rate. On four when joined at the crease by Nasser Hussain, Stewart dominated the 77-run partnership to such an extent that the Essex batsman had made just 19 when he pushed carelessly at a wide one from Matthew Nicholson, a mistake that gave the debutant fast bowler a fortuitous first Test scalp.

Nicholson, who took seven wickets against England for Western Australia at the start of the tour, did not find the strong winds to his liking. Apart from the wicket, his 10 overs went at nearly six runs an over; a major haemorrhage induced mainly by Stewart, who played a series of cuts and pull shots.

Joined by Mark Ramprakash, who virtually matched his partner's telling strokeplay, England began to take control. Bringing up his hundred with an all-run four off Stuart MacGill, Stewart became the first England captain since Mike Denness in 1975 to pass three figures at the MCG.

Soon after Ramprakash reached his fifty from 69 balls, a milestone that also saw the 200 up in 51.4 overs, a run-rate rarely achieved against a side



The England captain, Alec Stewart, soaks up the applause after his first century against Australia

Allsport

as disciplined as Australia. England have been here before in the series, though, and, like a nightmare from which they cannot escape, began once again to lose wickets, despite the home side having to resort to Steve Waugh.

Having started positively against MacGill, Stewart tried instead to be smart by sweeping too fine, and was bowled round his legs. Had he not predetermined the stroke, he could have met it on the full toss, though after his demise in

Brisbane that is no guarantee against dismissal either. An over later, Waugh showed why it is dangerous to treat him lightly and Ramprakash paid dearly when he casually lifted a drive to mid-on.

Once again England had contrived to raise Australia's game by bringing two new batsmen to the crease. Hegg, his first Test innings not one to savour, quickly gave Waugh a second wicket, as he edged an outswinger. Like Atherton, Hegg stood his ground and

looked surprised when Bucknor gave him out.

At 206 for 6, Stewart's efforts could easily have been in vain. Instead, a flurry from Graeme Hick and some solid defending from Dean Headley allowed 38 runs to be added before Headley nibbled at McGrath.

Hick, told to be positive when batting with the tail, took the opportunity to thump MacGill for a huge six over midwicket that must have carried all of 90 yards. Unfortunately, when Hick tried to repeat the feat a

few balls later, he found the toe of the bat and holed out at mid-on. The last two wickets both fell to MacGill and the leggie finished with 4 for 61.

With 27 overs of the day remaining, Gough tore in, clocking the fastest ball of the day, a 145kmh thunderbolt. Bowling a light line, his persistence proved too much for Michael Slater, who was plumb lbw. Not long after, Mark Taylor edged to Hick at second slip. Unlike previous Tests, this time the chance was taken.

MELBOURNE SCOREBOARD

Second day, Australia won toss		Progress: First innings No play. Second day: 50: 64 min, 15 overs, 100: 126 min, 29.5 overs, Lumsden 127 for 3 (Stewart 78, 144 for 20, Butcher 174 for 17), 174: 141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
M A Atherton c Healy b McGrath	0	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
A J Stewart b MacGill	107	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
M A Butcher c Langer b McGrath	0	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
N Hussain c Healy b Nicholson	19	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
M R Ramprakash c McGrath	63	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
120 min, 92 balls, 5 fours		141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
G Hick c Fleming b MacGill	39	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
D W Headley c Taylor b McGrath	14	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
52 min, 49 balls		141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
D Gough b MacGill	11	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
21 min, 14 balls, 2 fours		141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
A R Cullen not out	0	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
11 min, 2 balls		141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
A D Mullally lbw b MacGill	0	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
3 min, 5 balls		141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
Extras (b4 r5 nb4)	14	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
Total (369 min, 76 overs)	270	141 overs, 200: 211 min, 51.2 overs, Bat 237 for 168, Headley 141 for 68 overs	
Falls: 1-0 (Atherton) 2-8 (Butcher) 3-81 (Hussain) 4-200 (Stewart) 5-202 (Ramprakash) 6-206 (Hegg) 7-244 (Headley) 8-256 (Nicholson) 9-270 (Fleming) 10-271-0 (Gough) 11-271-0 (Slater) 12-271-0 (Taylor) 13-271-0 (MacGill) 14-271-0 (Hick) 15-271-0 (Cullen) 16-271-0 (Mullally) 17-271-0 (Stewart) 18-271-0 (Butcher) 19-271-0 (Atherton) 20-271-0 (Hussain) 21-271-0 (Ramprakash) 22-271-0 (Hegg) 23-271-0 (Headley) 24-271-0 (Nicholson) 25-271-0 (Fleming) 26-271-0 (Gough) 27-271-0 (Slater) 28-271-0 (Taylor) 29-271-0 (MacGill) 30-271-0 (Hick) 31-271-0 (Cullen) 32-271-0 (Mullally) 33-271-0 (Stewart) 34-271-0 (Butcher) 35-271-0 (Atherton) 36-271-0 (Hussain) 37-271-0 (Ramprakash) 38-271-0 (Hegg) 39-271-0 (Headley) 40-271-0 (Nicholson) 41-271-0 (Fleming) 42-271-0 (Gough) 43-271-0 (Slater) 44-271-0 (Taylor) 45-271-0 (MacGill) 46-271-0 (Hick) 47-271-0 (Cullen) 48-271-0 (Mullally) 49-271-0 (Stewart) 50-271-0 (Butcher) 51-271-0 (Atherton) 52-271-0 (Hussain) 53-271-0 (Ramprakash) 54-271-0 (Hegg) 55-271-0 (Headley) 56-271-0 (Nicholson) 57-271-0 (Fleming) 58-271-0 (Gough) 59-271-0 (Slater) 60-271-0 (Taylor) 61-271-0 (MacGill) 62-271-0 (Hick) 63-271-0 (Cullen) 64-271-0 (Mullally) 65-271-0 (Stewart) 66-271-0 (Butcher) 67-271-0 (Atherton) 68-271-0 (Hussain) 69-271-0 (Ramprakash) 70-271-0 (Hegg) 71-271-0 (Headley) 72-271-0 (Nicholson) 73-271-0 (Fleming) 74-271-0 (Gough) 75-271-0 (Slater) 76-271-0 (Taylor) 77-271-0 (MacGill) 78-271-0 (Hick) 79-271-0 (Cullen) 80-271-0 (Mullally) 81-271-0 (Stewart) 82-271-0 (Butcher) 83-271-0 (Atherton) 84-271-0 (Hussain) 85-271-0 (Ramprakash) 86-271-0 (Hegg) 87-271-0 (Headley) 88-271-0 (Nicholson) 89-271-0 (Fleming) 90-271-0 (Gough) 91-271-0 (Slater) 92-271-0 (Taylor) 93-271-0 (MacGill) 94-271-0 (Hick) 95-271-0 (Cullen) 96-271-0 (Mullally) 97-271-0 (Stewart) 98-271-0 (Butcher) 99-271-0 (Atherton) 100-271-0 (Hussain) 101-271-0 (Ramprakash) 102-271-0 (Hegg) 103-271-0 (Headley) 104-271-0 (Nicholson) 105-271-0 (Fleming) 106-271-0 (Gough) 107-271-0 (Slater) 108-271-0 (Taylor) 109-271-0 (MacGill) 110-271-0 (Hick) 111-271-0 (Cullen) 112-271-0 (Mullally) 113-271-0 (Stewart) 114-271-0 (Butcher) 115-271-0 (Atherton) 116-271-0 (Hussain) 117-271-0 (Ramprakash) 118-271-0 (Hegg) 119-271-0 (Headley) 120-271-0 (Nicholson) 121-271-0 (Fleming) 122-271-0 (Gough) 123-271-0 (Slater) 124-271-0 (Taylor) 125-271-0 (MacGill) 126-271-0 (Hick) 127-271-0 (Cullen) 128-271-0 (Mullally) 129-271-0 (Stewart) 130-271-0 (Butcher) 131-271-0 (Atherton) 132-271-0 (Hussain) 133-271-0 (Ramprakash) 134-271-0 (Hegg) 135-271-0 (Headley) 136-271-0 (Nicholson) 137-271-0 (Fleming) 138-271-0 (Gough) 139-271-0 (Slater) 140-271-0 (Taylor) 141-271-0 (MacGill) 142-271-0 (Hick) 143-271-0 (Cullen) 144-271-0 (Mullally) 145-271-0 (Stewart) 146-271-0 (Butcher) 147-271-0 (Atherton) 148-271-0 (Hussain) 149-271-0 (Ramprakash) 150-271-0 (Hegg) 151-271-0 (Headley) 152-271-0 (Nicholson) 153-271-0 (Fleming) 154-271-0 (Gough) 155-271-0 (Slater) 156-271-0 (Taylor) 157-271-0 (MacGill) 158-271-0 (Hick) 159-271-0 (Cullen) 160-271-0 (Mullally) 161-271-0 (Stewart) 162-271-0 (Butcher) 163-271-0 (Atherton) 164-271-0 (Hussain) 165-271-0 (Ramprakash) 166-271-0 (Hegg) 167-271-0 (Headley) 168-271-0 (Nicholson) 169-271-0 (Fleming) 170-271-0 (Gough) 171-271-0 (Slater) 172-271-0 (Taylor) 173-271-0 (MacGill) 174-271-0 (Hick) 175-271-0 (Cullen) 176-271-0 (Mullally) 177-271-0 (Stewart) 178-271-0 (Butcher) 179-271-0 (Atherton) 180-271-0 (Hussain) 181-271-0 (Ramprakash) 182-271-0 (Hegg) 183-271-0 (Headley) 184-271-0 (Nicholson) 185-271-0 (Fleming) 186-271-0 (Gough) 187-271-0 (Slater) 188-271-0 (Taylor) 189-271-0 (MacGill) 190-271-0 (Hick) 191-271-0 (Cullen) 192-271-0 (Mullally) 193-271-0 (Stewart) 194-271-0 (Butcher) 195-271-0 (Atherton) 196-271-0 (Hussain) 197-271-0 (Ramprakash) 198-271-0 (Hegg) 199-271-0 (Headley) 200-271-0 (Nicholson) 201-271-0 (Fleming) 202-271-0 (Gough) 203-271-0 (Slater) 204-271-0 (Taylor) 205-271-0 (MacGill) 206-271-0 (Hick) 207-271-0 (Cullen) 208-271-0 (Mullally) 209-271-0 (Stewart) 210-271-0 (Butcher) 211-271-0 (Atherton) 212-271-0 (Hussain) 213-271-0 (Ramprakash) 214-271-0 (Hegg) 215-271-0 (Headley) 216-271-0 (Nicholson) 217-271-0 (Fleming) 218-271-0 (Gough) 219-271-0 (Slater) 220-271-0 (Taylor) 221-271-0 (MacGill) 222-271-0 (Hick) 223-271-0 (Cullen) 224-271-0 (Mullally) 225-271-0 (Stewart) 226-271-0 (Butcher) 227-271-0 (Atherton) 228-271-0 (Hussain) 229-271-0 (Ramprakash) 230-271-0 (Hegg) 231-271-0 (Headley) 232-271-0 (Nicholson) 233-271-0 (Fleming) 234-271-0 (Gough) 235-271-0 (Slater) 236-271-0 (Taylor) 237-271-0 (MacGill) 238-271-0 (Hick) 239-271-0 (Cullen) 240-271-0 (Mullally) 241-271-0 (Stewart) 242-271-0 (Butcher) 243-271-0 (Atherton) 244-271-0 (Hussain) 245-271-0 (Ramprakash) 246-271-0 (Hegg) 247-271-0 (Headley) 248-271-0 (Nicholson) 249-271-0 (Fleming) 250-271-0 (Gough) 251-271-0 (Slater) 252-271-0 (Taylor) 253-271-0 (MacGill) 254-271-0 (Hick) 255-271-0 (Cullen) 256-271-0 (Mullally) 257-271-0 (Stewart) 258-271-0 (Butcher) 259-271-0 (Atherton) 260-271-0 (Hussain) 261-271-0 (Ramprakash) 262-271-0 (Hegg) 263-271-0 (Headley) 264-271-0 (Nicholson) 265-271-0 (Fleming) 266-271-0 (Gough) 267-271-0 (Slater) 268-271-0 (Taylor) 269-271-0 (MacGill) 270-271-0 (Hick) 271-271-0 (Cullen) 272-271-0 (Mullally) 273-271-0 (Stewart) 274-271-0 (Butcher) 275-271-0 (Atherton) 276-271-0 (Hussain) 277-271-0 (Ramprakash) 278-271-0 (Hegg) 279-271-0 (Headley) 280-271-0 (Nicholson) 281-271-0 (Fleming) 282-271-0 (Gough) 283-271-0 (Slater) 284-271-0 (Taylor) 285-271-0 (MacGill) 286-271-0 (Hick) 287-271-0 (Cullen) 288-271-0 (Mullally) 289-271-0 (Stewart) 290-271-0 (Butcher) 291-271-0 (Atherton) 292-271-0 (Hussain) 293-271-0 (Ramprakash) 294-271-0 (Hegg) 295-271-0 (Headley) 296-271-0 (Nicholson) 297-271-0 (Fleming) 298-271-0 (Gough) 299-271-0 (Slater) 300-271-0 (Taylor) 301-271-0 (MacGill) 302-271-0 (Hick) 303-271-0 (Cullen) 304-271-0 (Mullally) 305-271-0 (Stewart) 306-271-0 (Butcher) 307-271-0 (Atherton) 308-271-0 (Hussain) 309-271-0 (Ramprakash) 310-271-0 (Hegg) 311-271-0 (Headley) 312-271-0 (Nicholson) 313-271-0 (Fleming) 314-271-0 (Gough) 315-271-0 (Slater) 316-271-0 (Taylor) 317-271-0 (MacGill) 318-271-0 (Hick) 319-271-0 (Cullen) 320-271-0 (Mullally) 321-271-0 (Stewart) 322-271-0 (Butcher) 323-271-0 (Atherton) 324-271-0 (Hussain) 325-271-0 (Ramprakash) 326-271-0 (Hegg) 327-271-0 (Headley) 328-271-0 (Nicholson) 329-271-0 (Fleming) 330-271-0 (Gough) 331-271-0 (Slater) 332-271-0 (Taylor) 333-271-0 (MacGill) 334-271-0 (Hick) 335-271-0 (Cullen) 336-271-0 (Mullally) 337-271-0 (Stewart) 338-271-0 (Butcher) 339-271-0 (Atherton) 340-271-0 (Hussain) 341-271-0 (Ramprakash) 342-271-0 (Hegg) 343-271-0 (Headley) 344-271-0 (Nicholson) 345-271-0 (Fleming) 346-271-0 (Gough) 347-271-0 (Slater) 348-271-0 (Taylor) 349-271-0 (MacGill) 350-271-0 (Hick) 351-271-0 (Cullen) 352-271-0 (Mullally) 353-271-0 (Stewart) 354-271-0 (Butcher) 355-271-0 (Atherton) 356-271-0 (Hussain) 357-271-0 (Ramprakash) 358-271-0 (Hegg) 359-271-0 (Headley) 360-271-0 (Nicholson) 361-271-0 (Fleming) 362-271-0 (Gough) 363-271-0 (Slater) 364-271-0 (Taylor) 365-271-0 (MacGill) 366-271-0 (Hick) 367-271-0 (Cullen) 368-271-0 (Mullally) 369-271-0 (Stewart) 370-271-0 (Butcher) 371-271-0 (Atherton) 372-271-0 (Hussain) 373-271-0 (Ramprakash) 374-271-0 (Hegg) 375-271-0 (Headley) 376-271-0 (Nicholson) 377-271-0 (Fleming) 378-271-0 (Gough) 379-271-0 (Slater) 380-271-0 (Taylor) 381-271-0 (MacGill) 382-271-0 (Hick) 383-271-0 (Cullen) 384-271-0 (Mullally) 385-271-0 (Stewart) 386-271-0 (Butcher) 387-271-0 (Atherton) 388-271-0 (Hussain) 389-271-0 (Ramprakash) 390-271-0 (Hegg) 391-271-0 (Headley) 392-271-0 (Nicholson) 393-271-0 (Fleming) 394-271-0 (Gough) 395-271-0 (Slater) 396-271-0 (Taylor) 397-271-0 (MacGill) 398-271-0 (Hick) 399-271-0 (Cullen) 400-271-0 (Mullally) 401-271-0 (Stewart) 402-271-0 (Butcher) 403-271-0 (Atherton) 404-271-0 (Hussain) 405-271-0 (Ramprakash) 406-271-0 (Hegg) 407-271-0 (Headley) 408-271-0 (Nicholson) 409-271-0 (Fleming) 410-271-0 (Gough) 411-271-0 (Slater) 412-271-0 (Taylor) 413-271-0 (MacGill) 414-271-0 (Hick) 415-271-0 (Cullen) 416-271-0 (Mullally) 417-271-0 (Stewart) 418-271-0 (Butcher) 419-271-0 (Atherton) 420-271-0 (Hussain) 421-271-0 (Ramprakash) 422-271-0 (Hegg) 423-271-0 (Headley) 424-271-0 (Nicholson) 425-271-0 (Fleming) 426-271-0 (Gough) 427-271-0 (Slater) 428-271-0 (Taylor) 429-271-0 (MacGill) 430-271-0 (Hick) 431-271-0 (Cullen) 432-271-0 (Mullally) 433-271-0 (Stewart) 434-271-0 (Butcher) 435-271-0 (Atherton) 436-271-0 (Hussain) 437-271-0 (Ramprakash) 438-271-0 (Hegg) 439-271-0 (Headley) 440-271-0 (Nicholson) 441-271-0 (Fleming) 442-271-0 (Gough) 443-271-0 (Slater) 444-271-0 (Taylor) 445-271-0 (MacGill) 446-271-0 (Hick) 447-271-0 (Cullen) 448-271-0 (Mullally) 449-271-0 (Stewart) 450-271-0 (Butcher) 451-271-0 (Atherton) 452-271-0 (Hussain) 453-271-0 (Ramprakash) 454-271-0 (Hegg) 455-271-0 (Headley) 456-271-0 (Nicholson) 457-271-0 (Fleming) 458-271-0 (Gough) 459-271-0 (Slater) 460-271-0 (Taylor) 461-271-0 (MacGill) 462-271-0 (Hick) 463-271-0 (Cullen) 464-271-0 (Mullally) 465-271-0 (Stewart) 466-271-0 (Butcher) 467-271-0 (Atherton) 468-271-0 (Hussain) 469-271-0 (Ramprakash) 470-271-0 (Hegg) 471-271-0 (Headley) 472-271-0 (Nicholson) 473-271-0 (Fleming) 474-271-0 (Gough) 475-271-0 (Slater) 476-271-0 (Taylor) 477-271-0 (MacGill) 478-271-0 (Hick) 479-271-0 (Cullen) 480-271-0 (Mullally) 481-271-0 (Stewart) 482-271-0 (Butcher) 483-271-0 (Atherton) 484-271-0 (Hussain) 485-271-0 (Ramprakash) 486-271-0 (Hegg) 487-271-0 (Headley) 488-271-0 (Nicholson) 489-271-0 (Fleming) 490-271-0 (Gough) 491-271-0 (Slater) 492-271-0 (Taylor) 493-271-0 (MacGill) 494-271-0 (Hick) 495-271-0 (Cullen) 496-271-0 (Mullally) 497-271-0 (Stewart) 498-271-0 (Butcher) 499-271-0 (Atherton) 500-271-0 (Hussain) 501-271-0 (Ramprakash) 502-271-0 (Hegg) 503-271-0 (Headley) 504-271-0 (Nicholson) 505-271-0 (Fleming) 506-271-0 (Gough) 507-271-0 (Slater) 508-271-0 (Taylor) 509-271-0 (MacGill) 510-271-0 (Hick) 511-271-0 (Cullen) 512-271-0 (Mullally) 513-271-0 (Stewart) 514-271-0 (Butcher) 515-271-0 (Atherton) 516-271-0 (Hussain) 517-271-0 (Ramprakash) 518-271-0 (Hegg) 519-271-0 (Headley) 520-271-0 (Nicholson) 521-271-0 (Fleming) 522-271-0 (Gough) 523-271-0 (Slater) 524-271-0 (Taylor) 525-271-0 (MacGill) 526-271-0 (Hick) 527-271-0 (Cullen) 528-271-0 (Mullally) 529-271-0 (Stewart) 530-271-0 (Butcher) 531-271-0 (Atherton) 532-271-0 (Hussain) 533-271-0 (Ramprakash) 534-271-0 (Hegg) 535-271-0 (Headley) 536-271-0 (Nicholson) 537-271-0 (Fleming) 538-271-0 (Gough) 539-271-0 (Slater) 540-271-0 (Taylor) 541-271-0 (MacGill) 542-271-0 (Hick) 543-271-0 (Cullen) 544-271-0 (Mullally) 545-271-0 (Stewart) 546-271-0 (Butcher) 547-271-0 (Atherton) 548-271-0 (Hussain) 549-271-0 (Ramprakash) 550-271-0 (Hegg) 551-271-0 (Headley) 552-271-0 (Nicholson) 553-271-0 (Fleming) 554-271-0 (Gough) 555-271-0 (Slater) 556-271-0 (Taylor) 557-271-0 (MacGill) 558-271-0 (Hick) 559-271-0 (Cullen) 560-271-0 (Mullally) 561-271-0 (Stewart) 562-271-0 (Butcher) 563-271-0 (Atherton) 564-271-0 (Hussain) 565-271-0 (Ramprakash) 566-271-0 (Hegg) 567-271-0 (Headley) 568-271-0 (Nicholson) 569-271-0 (Fleming) 570-271-0 (Gough) 571-271-0 (Slater) 572-271-0 (Taylor) 573-271-0 (MacGill) 574-271-0 (Hick) 575-271-0 (Cullen) 576-271-0 (Mullally) 577-271-0 (Stewart) 578-271-0 (Butcher) 579-271-0 (Atherton) 580-271-0 (Hussain) 581-271-0 (Ramprakash) 582-271-0 (Hegg) 583-271-0 (Headley) 584-271-0 (Nicholson) 585-271-0 (Fleming) 586-271-0 (Gough) 587-271-0 (Slater) 588-271-0 (Taylor) 589-271-0 (MacGill) 590-271-0 (Hick) 591-271-0 (Cullen) 592-271-0 (Mullally) 593-271-0 (Stewart) 594-271-0 (Butcher) 595-271-0 (Atherton) 596-271-0 (Hussain) 597-271-0 (Ramprakash) 598-271-0 (Hegg) 599-271-0 (Headley) 600-271-0 (Nicholson) 601-271-0 (Fleming) 602-271-0 (Gough) 603-271-0 (Slater) 604-271-0 (Taylor) 605-271-0 (MacGill) 606-271-0 (Hick) 607-271-0 (Cullen) 608-271-0 (Mullally) 609-271-0 (Stewart) 610-271-0 (Butcher) 611-271-0 (Atherton) 612-271-0 (Hussain) 613-271-0 (Ramprakash) 614-271-0 (Hegg) 615-271-0 (Headley) 616-271-0 (Nicholson) 617-271-0 (Fleming) 618-271-0 (Gough) 619-271-0 (Slater) 620-271-0 (Taylor) 621-271-0 (MacGill) 622-271-0 (Hick) 623-271-0 (Cullen) 624-271-0 (Mullally) 625-271-0 (Stewart) 626-271-0 (Butcher) 627-271-0 (Atherton) 628-271-0 (Hussain) 629-271-0 (Ramprakash) 630-271-0 (Hegg) 631-271-0 (Headley) 632-271-0 (Nicholson) 633-271-0 (Fleming) 634-271-0 (Gough) 635-271-0 (Slater) 636-271-0 (Taylor) 637-271-0 (MacGill) 638-271-0 (Hick) 639-271-0 (Cullen) 640-271-0 (Mullally) 641-271-0 (Stewart) 642-271-0 (Butcher) 643-271-0 (Atherton) 644-271-0 (Hussain) 645-271-0 (Ramprakash) 646-271-0 (Hegg) 647-271-0 (Headley) 648-271-0 (Nicholson) 649-271-0 (Fleming) 650-271-0 (Gough) 651-271-0 (Slater) 652-271-0 (Taylor) 653-271-0 (MacGill) 654-271-0 (Hick) 655-271-0 (Cullen) 656-271-0 (Mullally) 657-271-0 (Stewart) 658-271-0 (Butcher) 659-271-0 (Atherton) 660-271-0 (Hussain) 661-271-0 (Ramprakash) 662-271-0 (Hegg) 663-271-0 (Headley) 664-271-0 (Nicholson) 665-271-0 (Fleming) 666-271-0 (Gough) 667-271-0 (Slater) 668-271-0 (Taylor) 669-271-0 (MacGill) 670-271-0 (Hick) 671-271-0 (Cullen) 672-271-0 (Mullally) 673-271-0 (Stewart) 674-271-0 (Butcher) 675-271-0 (Atherton) 676-271-0 (Hussain) 677-271-0 (Ramprakash) 678-271-0 (Hegg) 679-271-0 (Headley) 680-271-0 (Nicholson) 681-271-0 (Fleming) 682-271-0 (Gough) 683-271-0 (Slater) 684-271-0 (Taylor) 685-271-0 (MacGill) 686-271-0 (Hick) 687-271-0 (Cullen) 688-271-0 (Mullally) 689-271-0 (Stewart) 690-271-0 (Butcher) 691-271-0 (Atherton) 692-271-0 (Hussain) 693-271-0 (Ramprakash) 694-271-0 (Hegg) 695-271-0 (Headley) 696-271-0 (Nicholson) 697-271-0 (Fleming) 698-271-0 (Gough) 699-271-0 (Slater) 700-271-0 (Taylor) 701-271-0 (MacGill) 702-271-0 (Hick) 703-271-0 (Cullen) 704-271-0 (Mullally) 705-271-0 (Stewart) 706-271-0 (Butcher) 707-271-0 (Atherton) 708-271-0 (Hussain) 709-271-0 (Ramprakash) 710-271-0 (Hegg) 711-271-0 (Headley) 712-271-0 (Nicholson) 713-271-0 (Fleming) 714-271-0 (Gough) 715-271-0 (Slater) 716-271-0 (Taylor) 717-271-0 (MacGill) 718-271-0 (Hick) 719-271-0 (Cullen) 720-271-0 (Mullally) 721-271-0 (Stewart) 722-271-0 (Butcher) 723-271-0 (Atherton) 724-271-0 (Hussain) 725-271-0 (Ramprakash) 726-271-0 (Hegg) 727-271-0 (Headley) 728-271-0 (Nicholson) 729-271-0 (Fleming) 730-271-0 (Gough) 731-271-0 (Slater) 732-271-0 (Taylor) 733-271-0 (MacGill) 734-271-0 (Hick) 735-271-0 (Cullen) 736-271-0 (Mullally) 737-271-0 (Stewart) 738-271-0 (Butcher) 739-271-0 (Atherton) 740-271-0 (Hussain) 741-271-0 (Ramprakash) 742-271-0 (Hegg) 743-271-0 (Headley) 744-271-0 (Nicholson) 745-271-0 (Fleming) 746-271-0 (Gough) 747-271-0 (Slater) 748-271-0 (Taylor) 749-271-0 (MacGill) 750-271-0 (Hick) 751-271-0 (Cullen) 752-271-0 (Mullally) 753-271-0 (Stewart) 754-271-0 (Butcher) 755-271-0 (Atherton) 756-271-0 (Hussain) 757-271-0 (Ramprakash) 758-271-0 (Hegg) 759-271-0 (Headley) 760-271-0 (Nicholson) 761-271-0 (Fleming) 762-271-0 (Gough) 763-271-0 (Slater) 764-271-0 (Taylor) 765-271-0 (MacGill) 766-271-0 (Hick) 767-271-0 (Cullen) 768-271-0 (Mullally) 769-271-0 (Stewart) 770-271-0 (Butcher) 771-271-0 (Atherton) 772-271-0 (Hussain) 773-271-0 (Ramprakash) 774-271-0 (Hegg) 775-271-0 (

An open and shut case for selector

هكذا من الاصل

Problems mount for Bedford

ALL LEICESTER had to worry about was maintaining their superior defensive record. The weightiest thing on the mind of Dean Richards, their rugby manager, was keeping down the number of tries against struggling Bedford.

"We have conceded 10 tries in the last three league games and the motivation for today was not how many points we scored, but that we didn't concede any. The 10 tries really grated, it is not acceptable," said a disgruntled Richards. No wonder, because before those three games, which began with Wasps running six past them last month, Leicester had let in just 11 tries.

But true to the form of a side at the head of the Allied Dunbar Premiership, the Tigers duly kept out an eager, but ultimately overpowered Bedford. The smile was back on the face of the old Tiger.

The contrast between that and the troubles and travails of Rudi Straeuli is glaring. The Bedford director of rugby is assailed almost every day with some fresh hell. The conceding of tries, the total Bedford have let in is now 50, must be the least of his worries.

This was their ninth defeat on the trot and the former Springbok is unhappy about that. "I've lost nine games in a row and it has never happened to me. Not even at school," said the shell-shocked Straeuli.

Add to that the fact that Straeuli's own playing future hangs in the balance - he is awaiting a medical report on an Achilles tendon injury - but he had, in any case, announced his retirement from playing last month. Perhaps realising the folly of that, because his work permit states that he is granted permission to reside in this country as a professional player, not as a coach, Straeuli has been on the beach since then.

But there is every likelihood that the Home Office will want to re-examine Straeuli's status at Goldington Road, either when his work permit runs out in June next year, or earlier, if they feel he is in breach of the conditions. So there is one more problem for him worthy about.

But Straeuli is nothing if not an honourable man and he has a sound ethos.

"I've got a responsibility towards Bedford," he explained.

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN

Leicester 26
Bedford 0

"My goal was to get Bedford into the First Division and keep them there, so I am still fighting my corner. My goal, which some people are saying is unrealistic, is to keep Bedford stable in the First Division, working within the financial budget that they can afford. That's difficult."

Made even more so by the loss of key personnel. "People have just jumped ship," he said, perhaps having a swipe at coach Paul Turner (now with Saracens) and the man Straeuli replaced as director of rugby, Geoff Cooke.

"I could easily find a job back home. I've got a law degree. I've had offers, but I've signed a contract and I've got a moral responsibility to these boys at Bedford. I've got to keep on going."

His team is certainly not without heart. The spirit is willing, sadly the flesh is not there. And not even Rory Underwood, playing his first competitive match since leaving Welford Road in 1997 could mark his return with a try for old times' sake. With no financial means to attract the necessary key personnel Straeuli is in a strait-jacket. And that is another problem. While the club is confident that the next pay day in January will be met through the club's day-to-day earnings, the long-term financial future is still in the lap of the gods, or at least the legal authorities.

Owner Frank Warren's assets have been frozen pending a legal case against the American boxing promoter Don King, which is to be heard on 11 January. One way or the other Warren's assets will be released, but just how much will survive the hearing is another source of anxiety.

All they can do is persevere with what cash and playing resources they have to hand. But Straeuli must wish he were in a position to say what Richards said after the Tigers second clean sheet of the season. "We have a squad that could, potentially, win the title, but it is going to take an awful lot of hard work," Richards said.

He is right of course. Tigers have some big matches away from their cosy Welford Road



The Leicester flanker, Darren Garforth, is wrapped up by the Bedford defence as he goes on the charge at Welford Road

Brewer adds to West's ills

WEST HARTLEPOOL will have few better chances of causing an upset than this, but when you are down on your luck the last thing you should do is take chances with the referee, especially if he has just warned you for foul play. There are few players in the West team who know better than to cross the line between the inadvisable and the unacceptable than Mike Brewer.

But the former All Black, now West's director of rugby, who is only playing because of an injury crisis in his camp and who had been West's talisman in a fighting performance at Kingston Park, virtually handed the match to Newcastle in a

BY PAUL STEPHENS

Newcastle 29
West Hartlepool 13

moment of stupidity, which earned him 10 minutes in the sin-bin for taking out Doddie Weir at a line-out while the Newcastle jumper was still in mid-air. "I wasn't trying to take his legs away," Brewer said. "I was hanging on to his shorts trying to stop him jumping. I don't think it deserved a white card."

Until that point, with 18 minutes left to play, and all still to play for, the champions had been unsteady and uncertain in the face of some determined

West lacking. Newcastle had regained the lead with a penalty goal by Jonny Wilkinson, to go 15-13 ahead after 12 minutes of the second half and, on the evidence of what had preceded the fairly innocuous incident which turned the game, Newcastle needed something special to break down the West defence. Much to their surprise it was Brewer who did it for them.

While Brewer was serving his punishment, Newcastle took full advantage and scored 14 points to protect their unbeaten league record on this ground which stretches back to January 1996, and in so doing moved up a place in the table

to fifth, ahead of Harlequins on points difference. With West's seven-man scrum in all sorts of bother, Newcastle were able to release Va'anga Tuigamala for their third try, and push West back over their line for the fourth, which was claimed by their debutant scrum-half, Hall Charlton. Wilkinson converted both and Newcastle were in the clear.

If West are to take any comfort from defeat, they can enter the New Year with their depleted stock of self-belief replenished substantially by their refusal to accept the inevitable, against superior opponents. Three times West led, Steven Vile gave them an early ad-

vantage with a penalty, while tries by Wilkinson and Ross Beattie were matched by those from Steve John and Shane McDonald. But for Brewer's misdemeanour they might have been the foundations for victory.

Newcastle: Tries Wilkinson, Beattie, Tuigamala, Charlton; Conversions Wilkinson 3; Penalties Wilkinson, Beattie, Harlepool; Tries John, McDonald; Penalties Vile.

Newcastle: S. Legg, J. Naylor, V. Tuigamala (P. Massey 75), J. Wilkinson, M. Wood, R. Andrew (capt), H. Charlton, G. Graham, R. Neale, M. Hurter, D. Weir, G. Archer, P. Walton, R. Arnold (J. Carmichael 81), R. Beattie.

West Hartlepool: E. Farrell (P. Greaves 66), J. Benson, S. John, P. Tangina, M. Lure, S. Vile, R. Stone, J. Van der Elst (S. Sparks 75), S. McDonald, P. Beal, P. Farmer (capt), J. Ponton, M. Bentley, D. Monksley, M. Brewer. Referee: S. Perry (Goole, W. Yorkshire).

Saracens fall to youngster

BARRY IRVING looks set for a glowing future with London Scottish and Scotland after organising a surprise victory over Saracens on his club debut at a rain-swept Vicarage Road yesterday.

As Saracens, aiming for second place in the Allied Dunbar Premiership, lost their international half-backs Kyrn Bracken and Alain Penaud with injuries early on, Irving, the Exiles' fourth-choice No 10 at the start of the season, scored one of Scottish's three second-half tries.

Irving, from Sevenoaks in Kent, said: "I managed to thrive today. I faced international back-rows before when I played for our second team against Harlequins. The Saracens back-row might all be internationals but they are humans and not machines."

Irving, who will be 19 this week, has a Scottish father and a half-Scottish mother and was snapped up by Scotland's Under-18 team last season.

John Steele, the Exiles coach, was thrilled with the victory and said: "We have one of the best defensive and disciplinary records in the Premiership and our style held up magnificently today."

Saracens saw off an ominous start by the visitors during which Rob Hunter, Conan Sharman and Irving came within a yard of scoring and they took

BY TERRY COOPER

Saracens 7
London Scottish 24

the lead in the 30th minute when Brendan Daniel side-stepped over after a break by Ryan Constable.

Gavin Johnson converted, but the scoring dried up and Iain McAusland's penalty in first-half injury time was the first of four Scottish scores without reply.

Scottish went ahead with a try six minutes into the second half when Ian Bonney, Sharman and try-scorer Kenny Milligan hacked the ball all the way downfield.

McAusland converted and added the points to Irving's try eight minutes from time. That put his side 17-7 ahead and the evergreen lock Mick Watson went over two minutes from time for his side's third try.

Bracken seems likely to miss three weeks after being taken off apparently concussed and he was taken to hospital for an x-ray on his cheekbone.

Saracens: Tries Daniel, Conversion Johnson, Leader Scotland: Tries Irving, Milligan, M. Watson; Conversions McAusland 3; Penalties I. McAusland.

Saracens: Johnson, Daniel, Constable, Ravenscroft, R. Wallace, Penaud (Singer, 4), Bracken (Free, 1), Flannery (Redy, 68), Chuter, P. Wallace, Johns (Chesney, 48), Greig, Coker, Diprose, Pienaar, London Scottish: McAusland, Milligan, Bonney, Eriksson, Sharman (Davis, 64), Irving, Easterby, Johnstone, Rudham (Cummins 73), Burnett, Jones, Watson (Fenn, Hunter, Holmes). Referee: R. Goodfrie (Workeath).

Sampson's late lesson for Gloucester

AS LUCK goes, Gloucester's is downright cruel at the moment. Having been within a hand's breadth of ending a dismal run in the League at Wasps, where they have not won in 12 years of the competition, they fell in the last minute of normal time to a Paul Sampson try which helped lift Wasps back to third place in the Allied Dunbar Premiership.

The fact that Gloucester promptly conceded another injury time was neither here nor there. It merely served to remind the Cherry-and-Whites that you have to keep going to the end, whenever that may be. Earlier this season it was a late

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN

Wasps 23
Gloucester 9

try which earned Wasps victory at Fortress Kingsholm. You'd think they would have learned.

The try for Sampson, making his first Premiership since breaking an ankle in the summer, followed an astute kick by Wasps' stand-off, Alex King. Chris Catling missed the ball as it scudded across the turf, Sampson stuck out a boot, made contact and, as might be expected of someone who can cover 100m in 10.4sec, scam-

bled to his feet, scorched past Gloucester's despairing defender, Rory Greenleade-Jones, and just got a hand to the ball.

Andy Le Chevalier's second try in as many matches a few minutes later was symptomatic of a side that had given its all and had nothing left in the tank.

It was a savage lesson, especially in the light of the way the whole side had defended until that Sampson try and particularly unfair for the pack, who comfortably outplayed their opposite numbers. The driving mauls were top class; the scrums were churning moments of power-play; and they

were at Wasps from the outset, knocking them backwards at every opportunity no matter where they were.

Unfortunately on two occasions early on they were with-in Kenny Logan's range, and he landed penalties as the defence piled over the offside line and then pulled down a maul.

But first Mark Mapletto, back at fly-half, knocked over a penalty and while he was kicking his heels in the sin bin for a late shoulder charge on Wasps' scrum-half, Martyn Wood, Terry Fanolua popped over another. Mapletto's second penalty woke up Wasps and they at-

tacked from out wide where they had a distinct edge. Another Gloucester lapse in the 78th minute let Wasps in with a third Logan penalty. Injury time followed and ended Gloucester's dream of adding to their solitary away win this season.

Wasps: Tries Sampson, Le Chevalier, Greenleade-Jones, Logan 2, Penalties Logan 3; Conversions Le Chevalier 2, Fanolua.

Wasps: J. Levesey, P. Sampson, L. Kruse, R. Henderson, K. Logan, A. King, M. Wood, D. Molloy (S. Mitchell 77), A. Black (L. O'Shea 52), A. Ford (S. Shaw 57), M. Woodcock (capt), L. Dalgleish, J. Worsley (P. Scherrie, 46), P. Voley.

Gloucester: C. Catling, B. Johnson, T. Fanolua, R. Tombs, P. Saint-Andre (R. Greenleade-Jones, 29), M. Mapletto, L. Sanders (S. Benson, 67), T. Woodman, N. McCarthy, A. Deason, R. Fielder (capt), M. Connolly (S. O'Shea, 71), K. Jones (N. Carter, 61).

Referee: S. Lander (Liverpool).

Stamping earns Morris suspension

THE SWANSEA prop Darren Morris has been banned for two matches following his sending-off for stamping during the Anglo-Welsh friendly against Bath. Swansea's director of rugby, Baden Evans, the Bath coach, Andy Robinson, and Wales coach, Graham Henry, formed the disciplinary panel.

Morris was given his marching orders after 71 minutes for stamping on Andy Long at a ruck. Long had to leave the field immediately after the incident

Swansea 50
Bath 17

to have six stitches put in a wound on the back of his head.

Swansea recovered from the blow to humble the European champions at St Helen's.

With the Five Nations looming and Wales still searching for a competent loosehead prop, there were fears that Morris would not be available to take his place in Henry's squad. But a disciplinary code for the

penalties gave Swansea the lead and when Colin Charvis was driven over for a try on 12 minutes Thomas was on hand to convert from close in. Paul Arnold and Garin Jenkins added first-half tries and Thomas kicked two more penalties. Matthew Robinson scored two tries in as many minutes straight after the restart and though Ian Balshaw touched down for Bath, Swansea went even further ahead with a converted penalty try.

ALLIED DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP ONE

Harlequins	17	15
Leicester	26	0
Newcastle	29	13
Richmond	13	25
Saracens	7	24
Wasps	23	9

W D L F A Pts

Leicester	14	0	3	423	236	22
Wasps	13	0	3	362	272	20
Saracens	14	0	5	417	307	20
Harlequins	14	0	5	413	278	18
Newcastle	13	0	5	366	313	16
Richmond	13	0	5	339	325	16
Bath	13	0	7	632	264	14
L. Irish	14	0	7	345	347	14
London	13	0	7	630	351	14
Gloucester	14	0	7	299	310	14
Cardiff	14	0	9	323	397	10
Bedford	14	0	12	294	446	8
W. Pool	14	1	13	205	559	2

ANGLO WELSH FRIENDLIES

Swansea	50	17
Northampton	38	10

W D L F A Pts

Swansea	14	0	3	423	236	22
Northampton	14	0	3	362	272	20

W D L F A Pts

Swansea	14	0	3	423	236	22
Northampton	14	0	3	362	272	20

LEAGUE TWO NORTH

Aspen	14	0	3	332	196	22
New Brighton	13	0	3	268	178	22
W. Pool	13	0	3	265	158	20
Mac Police	14	0	5	259	262	17
Northwich	13	0	7	194	197	14
Thames	14	0	7	240	250	13
Weston-s-M	13	0	7	203	255	11
Plymouth	13	0	8	275	287	9
Bridge	13	0	8	231	291	8
Clyde	13	0	9	213	254	7
Redrath	13	0	9	197	310	7
Chalfont	13	0	10	176	306	6
Havant	13	0	11	151	369	4

W D L F A Pts

Aspen	14	0	3	332	196	22
New Brighton	13	0	3	268	178	22
W. Pool	13	0	3	265	158	20
Mac Police	14	0	5	259	262	17
Northwich	13	0	7	194	197	14
Thames	14	0	7	240	250	13
Weston-s-M	13	0	7	203	255	11
Plymouth	13	0	8	275	287	9
Bridge	13	0	8	231	291	8
Clyde	13	0	9	213	254	7
Redrath	13	0	9	197	310	7
Chalfont	13	0	10	176	306	6
Havant	13	0	11	151	369	4

LEAGUE TWO SOUTH

Barking	13	0	3	332	196	22
Essex	13	0	3	268	178	22

W D L F A Pts

Barking	13	0	3	332	196	22
Essex	13	0	3	268	178	22

[illegible]

22/FOOTBALL

Poyet counts the cost of the Chelsea high life

CHELSEA'S WIN at Southampton on Saturday took them to the top of the table but came at the price of an injury to Gustavo Poyet, the Uruguayan midfielder who scored the second of their two clinically executed goals and was then carried off.

It will not be known for a day or two how long the knee injury - inflicted by Southampton's debutant French defender, Patrick Colletier - will keep Poyet out, but, as he missed eight months of last season with cruciate ligament damage in the same area of his leg, the knock

BY NICK HARRIS

Southampton 0
Chelsea 2

was causing concern on Saturday night.

"We'll miss him if he has to be out because he's on fire at the moment," Graham Rix, Chelsea's first-team coach, said. Poyet will be especially missed if he cannot play against Manchester United at Stamford Bridge tomorrow.

"We showed at Old Trafford [in the

recent 1-1 draw] that we can match United but they've got a very good record at Stamford Bridge," Rix said, but would not be drawn on the significance of tomorrow's game to both sides' title prospects. "It is a big game," he said, "but, win or lose on Tuesday, it doesn't mean we're going to win or lose the championship."

Whatever Rix's public pronouncements, there can be little doubt that what happens tomorrow will be, if not crucial, then significant in indicating the championship potential of the first and second-placed clubs. Chelsea

hope to welcome back Marcel Desailly, Roberto di Matteo and Graeme Le Saux (absent on Saturday due to the birth of his daughter on Christmas Day), and their participation can only make a side brimming with quality even stronger.

Saturday's first goal exemplified the class of their mercurial Little and Large pairing, a deft run by the diminutive Gianfranco Zola down the left ending in a cross met by the towering Tore Andre Flo and slotted home with the merest pat of the boot. Bjarne Goldbaek was a powerful

creative force in midfield and every time Frank Leboeuf took possession he tore forward like a steamroller through a field of matchstick men. If any man in Blue looked a liability it was Ed de Goey in goal, but even his occasional flappings were never likely to be punished by the Saints.

Rix gave notice that his side are not merely a bunch of mercenary foreigners on a lucrative jolly, but a committed unit consisting of internationalists on one hand and home-grown youth-programme talent, such as Jody Morris and John Terry,

on the other. "World Cup winner [Leboeuf] or 17-year-old boy [Terry], they're all pulling in the same direction," he said.

As for Southampton, their visitors on Saturday were just the latest side to have beaten them this season. They now face two vital relegation matches, starting today at fellow strugglers Nottingham Forest, while Charlton will be the next League opposition at The Dell on 9 January.

The signs were not all bad against Chelsea - Matt Le Tissier looked sharp and committed before having

to leave the field with a calf pull after 25 minutes. Colletier made an assured debut, and the Moroccan Hassan Kachoul showed potential with several runs - but the time has come to turn potential to points.

Goals: Flo (20) 0-1; Poyet (48) 0-2.
Southampton (4-4-2): Jones; Collier, Lundevall, Morrison, Riley, Kachoul, Poyet, Le Tissier (Riley 45). Southampton substitutes not used: Bridges, Stengard (94).
Chelsea (4-4-2): De Goey, Poyet, Duberry, Leboeuf, Little, Flo, Zola, Flo (Nicholls, 83). Southampton substitutes not used: Forsyth, Hargrove, Hargrove (94).
Referee: D. Ellery (Harrow). Bookings: Southampton: Collier, Chelsea: Morris, Babayaro.
Man of the match: Zola.
Attendance: 15,793.

Happiness amid the humbug



John Aloisi, the Coventry City substitute who scored the equalising goal on Saturday, cuts between the Spurs defenders Steve Carr (left) and Luke Young at Highfield Road

Gullit defends absent habit

BY SIMON TURNBULL

Newcastle United 0
Leeds United 3

IF RUUD GULLIT wore a haunted expression beneath those dreaded locks on Boxing Day evening, it was hardly surprising. The ghost of his Christmas past had, after all, reared its bearded head.

Twelve months ago a Chelsea shareholder was questioning the value of employing "an absentee landlord" as the manager at Stamford Bridge. Not long afterwards, Ken Bates decided that Gullit should become a permanent absentee.

On Saturday, the day he introduced a £23m striking partnership to the Premiership, Gullit found himself on the defensive, justifying what one shareholder described at Newcastle United's annual general meeting last Monday as his "semi-detached" style of management. At the time Newcastle's Dutch manager was in a flat rather than a semi in the Amsterdam apartment he shares with his girlfriend, Estelle Cruyff.

In the cramped but cosy press room at St James' Park, Gullit did not deny that he was semi-detached or even a Dutch bungalow of a boss. He simply pointed to the less-than-ideally placed homes of others on the football management map.

"Kevin Keegan lives up here and works in London," he said, "and Bryan Robson works in Middlesbrough and lives in Manchester. Nobody mentions this. I ask myself: 'Why is there a difference?'"

"Brian Kidd always prepared the team at Manchester United. Alex Ferguson never took the training, as far as I know. I prepare the team here and I do the training. I have to ask the question: 'Why have a go at me?' I think it is out of order. But I have big shoulders. I will go forward."

Gullit goes on to Anfield today, and with hope rather than conviction in his heart. Fortunate to beat a below-par Leicester City the previous week, his Newcastle team took another backward step on Saturday.

Even with Duncan Ferguson ranged alongside Alan Shearer in attack for the first time, they failed to inflict any damage on a Leeds defence missing Lucas Radebe, Robert Molenar and Martin Hiden. It was an indictment of a team boasting such a high priced front two that Gullit was left lamenting: "If we had played another hour we would not have scored."

That was not entirely fair. In the last ten minutes Nikos Dabizas was denied by the brilliance of Nigel Martyn and a Ferguson header was nodded off the goal-line by David Hopkin. But Newcastle were guilty of failing to open a supply line to their two target men.

Stephen Glass was well shackled by Alf Inge Haaland on the left and George Georgiadis was like a Greek in a china-plate shop on the right. Gullit had, of course, hoped to unveil Ibrahim Ba on Saturday but he has now turned his attention closer to home to Newcastle United's home, that is in search of someone who can help the Magpies spread their wings. Steve Stone, born and bred in Gateshead, tops his revised list of wanted wide-boys.

Defensive assistance would have been useful, however, on Saturday as Harry Kewell, Lee Bowyer and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink took advantage of some ponderous play at the back to pinch three points for a Leeds team better organised but never truly dominant.

"The sexy football hasn't come yet," David O'Leary acknowledged, "but we're a young side that can go places over the next few years." With that, the Leeds manager went off to the place he happily calls home: his fully-detached residence in Harrogate.

Goals: Kewell (37) 0-1; Bowyer (61) 0-2; Hasselbaink (80) 0-3.
Newcastle United (4-4-2): Given; Charney, Dabizas, Hovory, Barron, Hughes (51); Georgiadis (Kewell 45). Newcastle substitutes not used: Solano, Mannan, Harp (94).
Leeds (4-4-2): Martyn; Halls, Westwood, Woodgate, Harte, Hovory, Bowyer, Hopkin, Radebe (Kewell 57); Kewell, Hasselbaink, Solano, Bowyer (94).
Referee: G. Willard (Warrington). Bookings: None.
Man of the match: Martyn.
Attendance: 36,783.

BOXING DAY afternoon at Highfield Road struck a festive note with its elements of pantomime but, for much of the time, it was as cheerless as the weather. Coventry, a side low on self-belief, met Tottenham, who are slowly rebuilding theirs. The consequence was a 1-1 draw which even George Graham described as "unattractive", and he should know.

Much of the football illustrated the great confidence trick which the Premiership has become. The stands were full, the players drawn from across the globe, national and international media filled the press box. But the Best League in the World? Bah, humbug. The most competitive, maybe, but the mutual commitment was unable to disguise the poor passing and touch, the lack of imagination and poise that characterises so many Premiership games.

Watching this after reading, in this paper's Saturday edition, an article about the subjugation of modern sport to commercial interests, and another about goal-laden Boxing Days of yore, it was not hard to view



GLENN MOORE

the ghosts of football past more fondly than those of present or future. But, an hour after the match, the spirit was lifted by conversations with two of Saturday's protagonists, Ian Walker and John Aloisi.

Neither players are immune to the head-turning temptations of the modern game. Walker's suit, a thick canary-yellow pinstripe on charcoal black, was the sort that gives contemporary footballers a reputation for having more money than sense. Aloisi, meanwhile, priced himself dearly enough when leaving

Portsmouth to dissuade Charlton from even meeting him to discuss a possible transfer.

Yet both drew pleasure beyond Saturday's obvious rewards of a useful point and associated bonus monies. For Walker his impressive performance, highlighted by a wondrous save from Steve Froggatt, suggested there was light at the end of a dark tunnel which has seen him suffer family bereavement, illness and unemployment, a loss of his England squad and Tottenham first-team place, and worrying injury.

For Aloisi, who scored an excellent first Premiership goal just 17 minutes after coming on as a substitute, the afternoon was one of unbridled joy at such a promising start to his Coventry career.

The Australian was "stolen" from financially stricken Portsmouth for £550,000, a ridiculous fee for a 22-year-old with experience in Belgium and Italy but one, said Gordon Strachan, which counterbalanced the club's loss on Dion Dublin's sale. As if to emphasise the modern dog-eat-dog ethos, Strachan spoke

of being "a vulture", adding: "That's the football business."

Aloisi spoke sympathetically of Pompey's plight but, like his new manager, had to deal in realities, which meant Coventry's own struggles after six matches without a win and Aloisi's step up in class.

He said: "Goals are goals at any level and if you get a chance you put it away, but there won't be so many chances at this level and no striker takes them all. It's not going to be easy and I'll need time to settle, but it is important I continue to believe in my ability."

Walker also dwelt on the subject of confidence. "It has been a depressing time and I'll be glad to see the back of 1998," he said. As well as being dropped and injured Walker's mother died, his wife had a difficult childbirth and his father was sacked by Norwich.

He added: "You try not to let things affect you but it is difficult for anyone to live through it all and keep their mind on work. Maybe having a break from the team did me good. You can't go through all that and not

come out a stronger person. I'm pleased with the way things are going now and it's up to me to keep working hard. There's always someone after your place and I've still got a lot to learn but I should be coming into my prime now."

The 27-year-old's save from Froggatt shortly before the hour looked to be enough to ensure Sol Campbell's goal, poked in from Darren Anderton's corner, would be a winner. This had followed the panto opening in which Magnus Hedman, Coventry's goalkeeper, was hurt in the warm-up, a linesman was carried off injured after 13 minutes and team-mates Gary McAllister and Darren Huckerby laid each other out in a mid-pitch collision after 15.

Spurs' industry, epitomised by Anderton (who clearly does not want to be banished to the wing when Steven Freund arrives), looked to be enough. Then Aloisi was introduced and soon took a pass from George Boateng, turned two defenders and sent a fierce drive past Walker.

Spurs' response was to bring on Stephen Clemence, the son of the for-

mer England goalkeeper Ray. This provided a historical footnote. Four minutes earlier Coventry had summoned Sam Shilton, son of Peter from the bench. Clemence senior, who attended on England scouting duty and would have noted Walker's form, confirmed it was the first time his son and that of his great rival had been in opposition. "Who would have believed back then that they would do so as midfielders," he said.

After the rejuvenation felt by Walker, and a dream realised for Aloisi, this tale of the unexpected showed there was substance and interest to Saturday's game. Like the silver in the Christmas pudding, you just had to look hard to find it.

Goals: Campbell (19) 0-1; Aloisi (82) 1-1.
Coventry City (4-4-2): Ogilvie; Nilsson, Williams (Green, 61); Shaw, Edwards (Aloisi, 89); Boateng, Solvest, McAllister; Froggatt; Huckerby (Shilton, 78). Whelan. Substitutes not used: Jaffer, Kirkland (94).
Tottenham Hotspur (4-4-2): Walker; Carr, Young, Campbell, Sinton; Fox, Anderton, Nielsen, Galloway (Clemence, 82); Armstrong, Ferdinand (Horton, 88). Substitutes not used: Calderwood, Edinburg, Baardens (94).
Referee: K. Burge (Rorypandy). Bookings: Coventry: Boateng, Froggatt; Tottenham: Sinton.
Man of the match: Anderton.
Attendance: 23,098.

Charlton in free fall

BY STEVE TONGUE

Wimbledon 2
Charlton Athletic 1

More worrying than all this for 7,000 visiting supporters at Selhurst Park was that for probably the first time, Charlton did not look like a Premiership side. Their manager, Alan Curbishley, put that down to attitude rather than ability and therefore chose to castigate his charges in public. "The players have caused their own problems," he said. "I've got no sympathy for them, because they threw the points away. The game was there for the taking."

That was not intended to be disrespectful to Wimbledon, whose defiance of the odds has kept them playing at the highest level ever since they first ascended there, alongside Charlton, in 1986. Notable lack of animosity between the two sets of supporters in a 19,000 crowd suggested a recognition of kindred spirits. Joe Kinnear, offered a clue or two about what the Addicks needed to survive the season.

"We wanted it a bit more than they did," he said of a game of few

chances. "You've got to get your players motivated to win your matches. I've got that at my club."

On Saturday, they were not at their best, but did not need to be to consolidate eighth place in the table and extend a record of only one home defeat all season. Three good goals were scored, the decisive one by the excellent Michael Hughes. The Northern Ireland international needs a hernia operation and sometimes spends four hours a day on the treatment table; he may or may not be able to manage another game at Leeds tomorrow.

Charlton have the little matter of a visit this afternoon from the champions, Arsenal, to contend with, after which Curbishley will again contemplate the financial war-chest the club has built up. Prudent or not, the increasing danger is that the war will be over before he has spent any of it.

Notable lack of animosity between the two sets of supporters in a 19,000 crowd suggested a recognition of kindred spirits. Joe Kinnear, offered a clue or two about what the Addicks needed to survive the season.

THE POST-MATCH press conference was barely five minutes old before the name came up of the man who had taken no part in this game but who was uppermost in everyone's thoughts.

Paolo Di Canio was playing truant in Italy rather than football in South Yorkshire on the day he was due to return to Wednesday's side at the end of his suspension, but he still managed to cast a long shadow over Hillsborough.

Before the game, Wednesday suspended their errant striker for a further two weeks without pay, and all through it they revealed how desperately they need him back - at any price.

"We lack strength in depth," admitted their manager, Danny Wilson, who was also without Benito Carbone, serving a one-match suspension for the verbal, rather than physical, abuse of a referee.

"Whether we get Paolo back is up to him," Wilson said. "We need quality players but there is a serious doubt about whether he is committed to the club. At the moment I am more interested in the rest of the players in my squad, who are prepared to turn out and play for us."

BY PHIL ANDREWS

Sheffield Wednesday 0
Leicester City 1

Unfortunately for him, without the flair of their two Italians Wednesday look a very ordinary side, whose lack of ingenuity and firepower was underlined by the fact that the Leicester goalkeeper, Kasey Keller, went through the match without having to make one serious save.

A couple of miscues by Peter Rudi and Nicolas Alexandersson, one of which went wide and the other over the bar, were about all they had to show for their patient but largely ineffective approach work.

Wilson's opposite number, Martin O'Neill, struggles along on even thinner resources, yet his own striking partnership of Emile Heskey and Tony Cottee offers a blend of youth and experience, power and subtlety that shows the domestic product can still be as effective as any fancy continental imports.

In the Boxing Day hunt for goals they could have bagged a brace apiece, though a single moment of precision finishing from Cottee was enough to settle it.

The England left-back Andy Hinchcliffe is usually the one reliable cog in a sometimes wayward Wednesday rearguard, but it was his weak back-header that Cottee latched on to in the 33rd minute before directing the brace across the face of Pavel Srnicek's goal into the far corner.

"It was hardly a chance at all," O'Neill said afterwards. "It was a terrific goal." Yet it was scant reward for a determined Leicester performance underpinned by the solidity of their back four and revolving round the creativity of their hyperactive midfield playmaker, Neil Lennon, and the reliable supply lines offered by wingers Steve Guppy and Andy Impey.

"We are sometimes allowed more space playing away from home and we exploited it well," O'Neill said.

Goals: Cottee (33) 0-1.
Sheffield Wednesday (4-4-2): Srnicek; Atterton, Thorne, Muller, Hinchcliffe; Alexandersson (Bischoff, 60); Jones, Sestanovic, Rudi; Booth, Humphrey (McGuffee, 57). Substitutes not used: Maguire, Sinner, Pressman (94).
Leicester City (4-4-2): Keller; Searles, Elton, Walsh, Ullahorne, Impey (Balogh, 81); Lennon, Green (Haggart, 90); Guppy, Heskey, Cottee. Substitutes not used: Marshall, Apheland (94).
Referee: M. Reed (Birmingham). Bookings: Wednesday: Booth, Sestanovic; Leicester: Cottee.
Man of the match: Lennon.
Attendance: 33,513.

d's

enal's h

ES9 Play

Game Results 26/12/98

WIMBLEDON 2-1 CHARLTON

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 0-1 LEICESTER

NEWCASTLE UNITED 0-3 LEEDS UNITED

SOUTHAMPTON 0-2 CHELSEA

COVENTRY CITY 1-1 TOTTENHAM

BIRMINGHAM 1-1 MANCHESTER UNITED

NOTTINGHAM FOREST 1-1 BLACKBURN

MIDDLESBROUGH 1-1 BOLTON

SUNDERLAND 1-1 SHEFFIELD UNITED

CARDIFF CITY 1-1 WOLVES

PRESTON 1-1 QPR

WATFORD 1-1 BURNLEY

Kidd's crusade on course

BY DERICK ALLSOP

Blackburn Rovers 2
Aston Villa 1

JOHN GREGORY pleaded an obvious miscarriage of justice with suitable vehemence, calling for the use of television evidence to assist rather than condemn match officials.

The cameras in this case confirmed Aston Villa's goalkeeper, Michael Oakes, released the ball before he strayed outside his penalty area and that he was wrongly dismissed by the referee, Dermot Gallagher who felt he was left with no other course of action after a linesman indicated the offence.

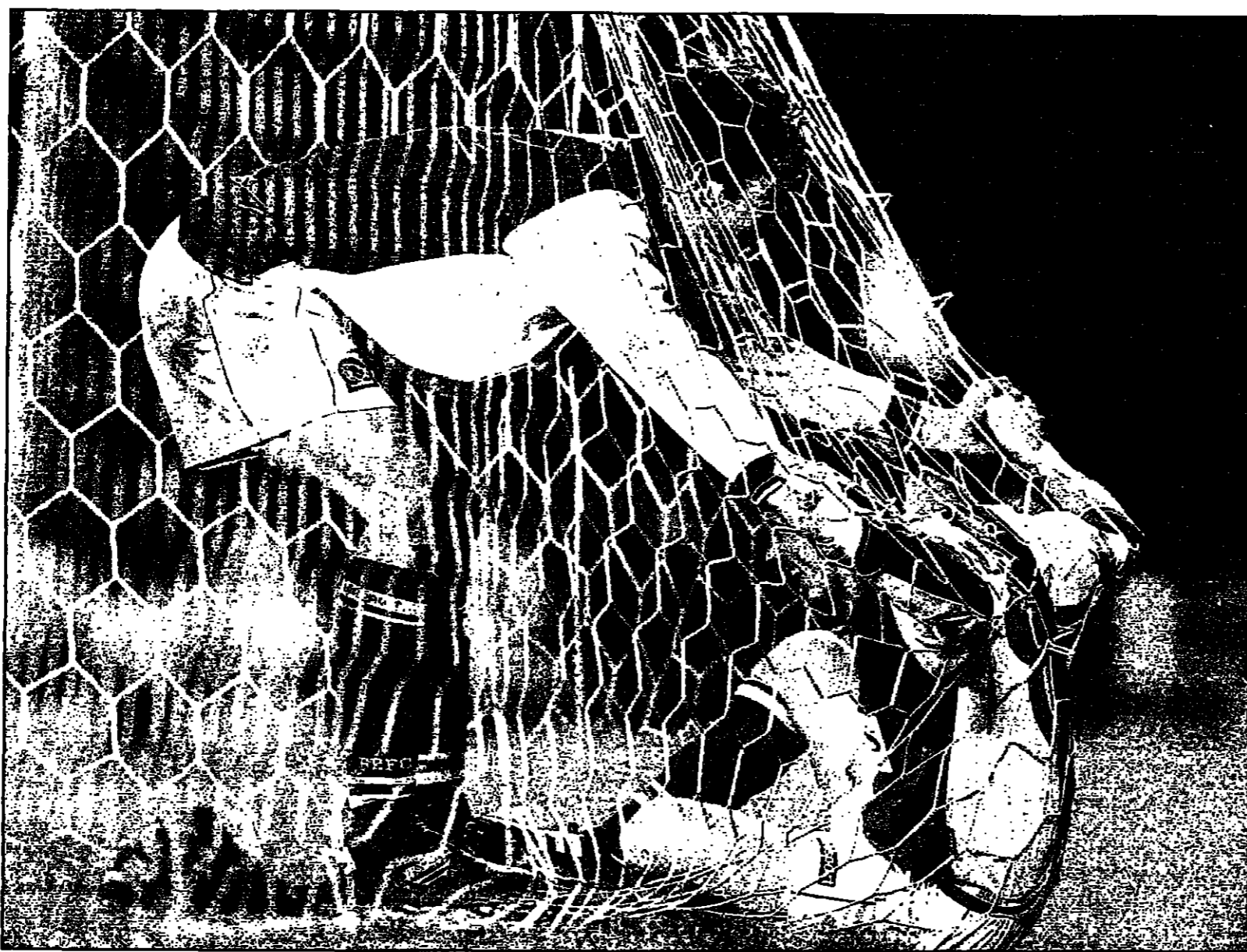
It is an untimely predicament for Gallagher as he endeavours to satisfy the authorities he is up to the job, following his suspension last season for being too lenient with Arsenal's Steve Bould. He must surely rescind this expulsion and spare Oakes a suspension.

As Gregory ruefully acknowledged, the points cannot be reclaimed. He concluded the 54th-minute incident cost his team the match. This contention, however, does not necessarily stand up to closer scrutiny. The facts are that Villa were trailing 1-0 when Oakes departed and would have been much further adrift but for the outstanding efforts of their keeper. Only at that juncture and, fired by the challenge of defying the odds, did they exert the kind of pressure required of aspiring champions.

An equaliser, from the unlikely source of Riccardo Scimeca, rewarded their passionate retaliation, only for Tim Sherwood to inflict a final, fatal wound and compound Gregory's outrage.

The greater damage was sustained in the first half, when Blackburn were much the more purposeful and incisive. Keith Gillespie, making his home debut, and Jason Wilcox provided venom from the flanks. Sherwood and Billy McKinlay persistent support from the heart of the midfield.

Chris Sutton's very presence up-front has a galvanising effect on the team and intimidates the opposition, while at the back Stéphane Henchoz's commanding influence is equally significant.



Tangled up in blue and white: Chris Sutton (left) and Kevin Gallacher celebrate Blackburn's first goal against Aston Villa

ALLSOP

The sum total of these components proved too weighty for Villa, who relied on the agility of Oakes to keep them in the contest with stirring saves from Sutton, Gillespie, especially, and Wilcox.

Villa, reverting to a familiar formation and preferring Julian Joachim to Stan Collymore alongside Dion Dublin, responded with an effort from Lee Hendrie, which was comfortably fielded by John Flan, in the Blackburn goal.

Even Oakes was powerless to frustrate Blackburn in the 44th minute, when Sutton and Sherwood won headers before Kevin Gallacher, called up only after Nathan Blake cried off,

threw himself at the ball to score the opening goal.

It was Villa's misfortune to meet a Blackburn side revived, reunited and seemingly re-invented by Brian Kidd. Theirs is a crusade for salvation and the signs are they will be fulfilled.

Injuries to Henchoz and Sutton drained much of the self-belief from Blackburn's play in the second half, and they were anxiously looking over their shoulders long before the finishing line.

Alan Thompson, a player of considerable vision and fine touch as well as a fabled left foot, might have equalised and ultimately plundered a winner. Collymore, bristling with vigour

and personal indignation, offered cunning collusion.

All too late. Gregory will know his team must produce consistent control and conviction if they are to remain championship contenders. Events in this vibrant match encapsulated Villa's recent form. They are toiling to salvage points and crumbs of comfort.

Gregory, defeated only five times as Villa's manager, did concede: "We have set standards for ourselves that are difficult to maintain."

That reality will concern him far more than the transparent and transient injustice of Ewood Park.

The unique demands of the

English game give both managers fresh problems and emotions to wrestle with today, Villa playing host to Sheffield Wednesday and Blackburn visiting Leicester City.

And yet it is matches such as this that have us crying out for more.

Goals: Gallacher (1-0) 44; Scimeca (1-1) 51; Sherwood (2-1) 54; Flan, Kenna, Henchoz (Broomes, 4-4-2), Daily, Davidson, Gillespie, Sherwood, McKinlay, Wilcox, Sutton (Davies, 65), Gallacher (Duff, 73). Substitutes not used: Johnson, Fettes (9).

Aston Villa (3-5-2): Oakes; Ehogu, Southgate, Scimeca; Watson, Hendrie (Rashed, 66-55), Taylor (Collymore, 69), Thompson, Wright, Dublin, Joachim. Substitutes not used: Charles, Draper, Grayson.

Referee: D. Gallagher (Barbury). Bookings: Blackburn: Davidson, Wilcox, Broomes, Davies, Aston Villa: Scimeca. Sent off: Aston Villa: Oakes. Man of the match: Sherwood. Attendance: 27,536.

we've got here. I'm talking about the problems for all our clubs. It's even more difficult for successful clubs. They really struggle."

And yet it is matches such as this that have us crying out for more.

Goals: Gallacher (1-0) 44; Scimeca (1-1) 51; Sherwood (2-1) 54; Flan, Kenna, Henchoz (Broomes, 4-4-2), Daily, Davidson, Gillespie, Sherwood, McKinlay, Wilcox, Sutton (Davies, 65), Gallacher (Duff, 73). Substitutes not used: Johnson, Fettes (9).

Aston Villa (3-5-2): Oakes; Ehogu, Southgate, Scimeca; Watson, Hendrie (Rashed, 66-55), Taylor (Collymore, 69), Thompson, Wright, Dublin, Joachim. Substitutes not used: Charles, Draper, Grayson.

Referee: D. Gallagher (Barbury). Bookings: Blackburn: Davidson, Wilcox, Broomes, Davies, Aston Villa: Scimeca. Sent off: Aston Villa: Oakes. Man of the match: Sherwood. Attendance: 27,536.

Happiness is a clean sheet for Ferguson

ONE MANAGER spoke earnestly of needing confidence, of maintaining a few clean sheets to put mortar between stone in the defensive positions. A worrying sequence of failure had been created.

Who? Not Dave Bassett - Nottingham Forest's position has gone beyond expressions of concern and now demands outpourings of optimism - but Alex Ferguson. The Manchester United manager wanted this result like his visiting counterpart requires a near miracle to stop his team dropping back into the First Division.

Which puts need in perspective. Ferguson's sights are on a fifth Premiership title in seven seasons, not to mention the European Cup, and the chaotic defending of recent weeks had put the first ambition in jeopardy and hardly inspired belief in the second. The "nil" in the visiting column was appreciated as much as the "three" in the home.

It was 8 November, before Peter Schmeichel's announcement that he is to leave United, since they last achieved that. "They are not bad defenders," Ferguson said, "they have been careless at times, but they defended sensibly today. If we get a few more clean sheets, confidence will come back."

For 25 minutes it was not only the home defence who looked bereft. Ryan Giggs could not have found a rooster spud in his Christmas dinner, David Beckham looked disorientated and Nicky Butt was expending loads of energy to little effect. A full-strength Forest could have taken them, a team weakened by injury and suspension could only hope for a lucky punch.

Any hope of that evaporated after 27 minutes. Beckham crossed and fortunately found Giggs' head rather than his errant feet, and when Dave Beasant tipped the effort round the post, the resultant corner arced straight to Ronny Johnsen, who headed emphatically down and in.

The effect was dramatic. A weight was lifted from United and it was a surprise that the

BY GUY HODGSON

Manchester United 3
Nottingham Forest 0

second goal took so long to come. The source was eyebrow-raising too, given the way United's centre-backs have been working together recently, but when Henning Berg won a header in the Forest area Johnsen swivelled before volleying immaculately.

At that point, as Bassett put it, "the party was on" and United's third goal was glorious. Teddy Sheringham passed inside to Beckham, whose first-time touch was such a plumped and sumptuous cushion it would have won the admiration of a master upholsterer. Giggs could luxuriate in it, delicately chipping the advancing Beasant.

The contest was over and Forest had to come to terms with equalising their own Premiership worst run of 16 successive matches without a victory. "Forget how it affects me," Bassett said, "think how it affects the players. Some of them were part of the record last time."

It was difficult not to feel sorry for Bassett, who had to give Chris Doig, a 17-year-old centre-back, his debut because his resources were so stretched. Compare that to United, who could call up Johnsen and Berg for the absent Gary Neville and Jaap Stam.

There were calls for Bassett's removal from the Forest fans during the match, which is harsh considering he came back from holiday last summer to find his board had managed to mislay 55 goals-worth of strikers while he was away. Optimism is the last resource. A defeat by Southampton today and even that might run out.

Goals: Johnsen (27) 1-0; Johnsen (59) 2-0; Giggs (61) 3-0. Manchester United (4-4-2): Schmeichel, P. Neville, Berg, Johnsen, I. Wright, Beckham, Butt, Kean (Greening, 65), Giggs (Barnes, 74); Scholes (Scholes, 65), Sheringham. Substitutes not used: Brown, Van der Gouw (9). Nottingham Forest (4-4-2): Beasant, Louis-Jean, Christie (Doig, 67), Armstrong, Rogers, San Williams (Rouadi, 53), Soane (Hodges, 76), Johnsen, Quashie, Freeman, Sheppey. Substitutes not used: Darviche, Croxall (9). Referee: J. Winter (Stockton-on-Tees). Bookings: Manchester: Gallacher, P. Neville, Forest: Rogers, Quashie, Christie. Man of the match: Johnsen. Attendance: 55,216.

Arsenal's hit and miss affair

IT WAS exactly what we should have expected at this time of year from the Premiership's most traditional club as Arsenal paid tribute to a faithful servant and indulged themselves to wasteful excess. As is also customary on the day after Christmas they were given the chance to feast on ham - West Ham, that is - but, while Arsenal were presented with the game in a plate, they merely picked at their hapless opponents in a match which should have been won by half a dozen goals.

Arsenal's wonderful first-half display provided a snapshot of Arsene Wenger's vision for the future. The thrust of their attack was driven by the powerful link play of Patrick Vieira and Emmanuel Petit, both of whom Dennis Bergkamp worried away at the West

BY PETER CONCHIE

Arsenal 1
West Ham United 0

Ham defence with a series of diagonal runs towards Shaka Hislop's far post. Marc Overmars, meanwhile, gave Trevor Sinclair a seasonal roasting on the left-hand side in what was a cruel mismatch of attacking prowess and defensive unfamiliarity.

A 1-0 interval lead was poor return indeed after Overmars' right-footed shot beat an inattentive Hislop at the near-post with only seven minutes gone. Bergkamp, Ray Parlour, Lee Dixon and Nicolas Anelka all had chances as Arsenal had 21 attempts on goal in the opening 45 minutes. Arsenal's proficiency was symbolised by the deci-

sion to substitute their substitute, Christopher Wreh, who was replaced by Giles Grimandi in the second half.

The return of Ian Wright to Highbury for the first time since his transfer to West Ham turned out to be a side-show. Arsenal's record goalscorer looked about to take a lap of honour before kick-off as he applauded the generous volume of chants and cheers from the Highbury crowd.

This, as it turned out, was the highlight of a miserable afternoon in which his most significant contribution was to nick the ball off the toe of Eyal Berkovic in the last minute to inadvertently prevent a West Ham equaliser.

"Things are not in our hands," Wenger commented afterwards on his team's champ-

ionship aspirations. "We have only won two [consecutive] games. We have to be realistic and our chances are very, very small." Wenger's disingenuousness was perhaps overplayed, but his team will be brittle title contenders without a consistent striker to complement the extraordinary attacking talents of Overmars and Bergkamp, especially as Anelka's ankle injury could keep him out for up to three weeks.

Goals: Overmars (7) 1-0. Arsenal (4-4-2) Manager: Wenger, Keown, Bould, Dixon; Petit, Vieira, Parlour, Overmars, Anelka (Wreh, 30; Grimandi, 76). Bergkamp. Substitutes not used: Winterburn, Bob Moore, Lukic (9). West Ham United (3-5-2) Manager: Pearce, Ferdinand, Potts; Keller (Lazaridis, 64), Louis, Berkovic, Lampard, Sinclair; Harrison, Wright. Substitutes not used: Breckie, Omojimi, Margas, Forrest (9). Referee: P. Jones (Loughborough). Bookings: Arsenal: Vieira, West Ham: Keller, Lazaridis. Attendance: 38,098. Man of the match: Bould.

Liverpool give Houllier hope

HALFWAY THROUGH the season, the Liverpool manager, Gerard Houllier, believes his charges have finally turned the corner.

"We have a lot of work to do but we are going up," he said, after his side became the first to win at Middlesbrough in 14 months. He singled out his five-man midfield, who threw a shield in front of his three defenders to protect them both from the supply to Middlesbrough's rampaging forwards and from themselves.

For while Paul Gascoigne was pushed backwards into less harmful areas and the tireless runs of Andy Townsend were curtailed, Liverpool's back line looked far from composed. Even given the gale, David James' kicking was poor, Phil Babb looked calamitously

BY SCOTT BARNES

Middlesbrough 1
Liverpool 3

uncomfortable under high balls with Hamilton Ricard and Brian Deane behaving like bulls in china shops, and even Steve Staunton passed the simplest of balls straight to a red shirt - Middlesbrough.

The home side's best moments came from Liverpool's unconventional defending. Their goal came when Deane outjumped Babb and outwitted James; Middlesbrough's closest effort was Babb's stooping header in front of James, who was expecting to gather Townsend's cross, and Ricard's clearest opening came courtesy of a strange back-header from Paul Ince.

Still, Liverpool did calm down after half-time, largely because their revolving forward line began to take the game to a defence that had lost its lynchpin.

"Gary Pallister had a fitness test before the game on his ankle and was feeling it after 10 minutes, when maybe he should have come off," Robson said. Pallister had first lost Ince, who set up Liverpool's first for Carragher, and then, unsettled by Michael Owen, back-passed for Mark Schwarzer to pick up and concede the free-kick that Jamie Redknapp blasted home for his side's second.

With Pallister substituted at half-time, it was Karlheinz Riedle's appearance on the hour in place of Robbie Fowler that sealed the game. Until then, Middlesbrough had a hope that a goalmouth gift

would come their way but, with Riedle commanding the ball at the other end of the field, James and Co relaxed.

Steve McManaman replaced Owen for 15 minutes of free flowing football and back-heels, before Vegard Heggem danced downfield past three dispirited defenders and looped the ball over Schwarzer in the 89th minute.

Goals: Carragher (17) 0-1, Deane (33) 1-1, Redknapp (35) 1-2, Heggem (89) 1-3. Middlesbrough (3-5-2): Schwarzer, Cooper, Vickers, Pallister (Fleming, 44); Fieba, Macdonald (Stump, 72), Gascoigne, Townsend (Bebb, 78), Gordon; Deane, Ricard. Substitutes not used: Moore, Benford (84). Liverpool (3-5-2): James; Carragher, Staunton, Babb; Heggem, Redknapp (Harrison, 90), Ince, Roger Byrne, Fowler (Riedle, 58), Owen (McManaman, 76). Substitutes not used: McCreer, Friedel (9). Referee: G. Poll (Tring). Bookings: Middlesbrough: Gascoigne, Fieba, Cooper. Liverpool: Babb, Byrne, Fowler. Man of the match: Schwarzer. Attendance: 34,626.

WORLD'S EASY PLAY

Game Results 26/12/98.
This Saturday there were 10 score draws:

COVENTRY	V	TOTTENHAM	LEYTON O.	V	SWANSEA
BLACKPOOL	V	WIGAN	ROCHDALE	V	CARLISLE
WALSALL	V	WYCOMBE	AIRDIE	V	RATH
YORK	V	BURNLEY	G'CK MORTON	V	CLYDEBANK
ARNET	V	PLYMOUTH	STENH' MUIR	V	E. STIRLING

*Matchmaker Adjudicated Results for postponed matches

Home wins (4): BRISTOL ROVERS, ALLOA, BRECHIN, DUMFRIES.
Away wins (1): ARBROATH.
No score draws (0): NONE.
Score draws (0): NONE.

11054 LUCKY WINNERS THIS WEEK
PAYOUTS FOR 8, 7, 6 AND 5 SCORE DRAWS
You can now play until 4.30pm every Saturday.

CATEGORY	NO. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT TO EACH WINNER
8 Score draws	3	£14,888
7 Score draws	112	£108.50
6 Score draws	1411	£17
5 Score draws	9828	£5

Value of tickets entered this week: 2339,089.
38% of sales contributed to prizes.
This week's contribution to good causes: £74,000.

EVERY WEEK IT'S A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME.

To claim your prize, follow instructions on the back of your ticket.
You must be 16 or over to play or claim a prize.
In the event of any discrepancy in the above, the data contained in the central computer system shall prevail.

Smiths find no answers blowing in the wind

THE GALE not withstanding, this was a match veering off course and heading for the rocks. Apart from one deflected, wind-assisted shot that almost embarrassed Mark Poom in the Derby goal, Everton did not look remotely like scoring. But then they had failed to do so in six of their nine home matches before this one. Quite how they managed to attract an audience of more than 39,000 is a mystery.

Derby must have regretted not being more adventurous. Then again, there were extenuating circumstances behind Jim Smith's decision to give the wing-back Rory Delap the job of partnering Paulo Wanchope in attack. Francesco Baiano is injured, Dean Burton on loan to Barnsley and Dean Sturridge had announced he was in no state of mind to play a few hours before kick-off.

This followed reports in the morning papers suggesting he was about to join Sheffield Wednesday or Nottingham Forest, neither of which, Smith said, had any substance.

As a consequence, the 25-year-old striker was confined to the substitutes' bench.

BY JON CULLEY

Everton 0
Derby County 0

However, following an injury to Delap, who limped off before half-time with suspected ligament damage, Sturridge is almost certain to return against Middlesbrough today. "He'll have to," Smith said. "We haven't got anyone else."

In the longer term Sturridge's future looks less certain. Smith is clearly annoyed with his behaviour and appears willing to let him go, even though his value is falling. Had Sturridge's form not nosedived - he has only four goals this season - he might have been sold for serious money but Smith, it appears, will not stand in his way even at a reduced fee.

Asked if he wanted to keep his erstwhile leading scorer, Smith made his feelings plain. "If he feels like that [ready to leave], maybe we will have to do something about it," he said.

Even without Sturridge, Derby could - perhaps should - have left Goodison with three points. Twice during their best spell in the first half, better

OUT NOW!

Want to know what's REALLY going on at WHITE HART LANE? Then make sure you get SPURS MONTHLY. With the latest issue including exclusive interviews with new signing MAURICIO TARICCO, JOHN SCALES and ALLAN NIELSEN, it's essential reading for all TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR fans!

Inside: Paul McVeigh, Allan Nielsen, John Scales, Ramon Vega, Luke Young

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

TARICCO

WE WELCOME THE NEW STAR TO WHITE HART LANE

SPORT

FRANCE GOES FOOTBALL CRAZY P15 • STRIKING PROBLEMS AT ARSENAL P20

Six-pointer a fight for survival

FOOTBALL

BY GUY HODGSON

HORSES WOULD not be allowed to do it but, what the hell, they are only footballers worth millions of pounds so today, for the second time in 48 hours, most of the country's teams will be straining muscles to the limit.

No wonder, as Brian Kidd points out, "the rest of Europe laughs at us".

Madness it may be, but you can hardly fault the soundness of the quality. Eight Premiership matches go ahead today and although the jewel in the programme, Chelsea versus Manchester United, will have to wait until tomorrow, the second, fourth, fifth and sixth teams will be in action.

As six points is the spread covering the top half dozen clubs, all their matches carry a heavy significance but the real

six-pointer will not involve any of the elite but two teams scrapping for survival at the other end of the table.

Southampton, three successes in 19 matches, meet Nottingham Forest, who are one game away from breaking their own Premiership record of 16 matches without a win, at the City Ground with both sensing hopelessness for the vanquished.

"Neither of us can afford to lose," Dave Jones, the Saints manager said, echoing his opposite number and, with Charlton facing a resurgent Arsenal at the Valley and Coventry playing away at West Ham, the prospect of making real

progress on the other strugglers beckons the winners.

The shades of spring 1997 have been drawn by Dave Bassett, the Forest manager, who can remember a 3-1 defeat that went a long way to spreading gloom in Nottingham and joy in Southampton once the blade had come down on the condemned.

"We're going to be edgy, Southampton are going to be edgy," Bassett said. "Who knows what will happen?"

"We are cutting each other's throats. We don't dislike each other, Dave Jones is a really nice fella, but we're both competitive and neither of us wants to be in the bottom three at the end of the season."

If there was a sadder and more predictable sound than the thousandth playing of

Slade's Christmas record on Boxing Day, then it was the Forest supporters chanting "Bassett out" at Old Trafford.

"I don't like it, but I understand it," Bassett, who has laboured under the disadvantage of having to use a squad weaker than the one he was promoted with, said. "They have had a pop at everyone else so they might as well have a go at the manager."

Forest's chances? "I'm always optimistic. I always believe I can get out of things."

A man with more grounds for optimism is John Gregory, whose Aston Villa team will retake the top of the Premiership if they defeat Sheffield Wednesday at home.

"We have had a few punches on the nose at various times," Gregory said in the

wake of Saturday night's defeat at Blackburn, "and we have shown the characteristics to bounce back and win our next game. That is what we need to do against Wednesday."

The Blackburn game was only our second away defeat in 15 Premiership matches, which isn't bad. But with the standards we set ourselves, it is always difficult to accept when we fall below it. So I am not the happiest man in the Premiership at the moment."

Standards have also fallen at Anfield if yesterday's allegations are true that the Liverpool players' Christmas party last week descended into a near orgy. Yet their manager Gerard Houllier must have been sorely tempted to book some strikers for the coach home, because Saturday's 3-1 win at

Middlesbrough was arguably their best of the season.

They meet Newcastle today with both sides looking for a consistent shape to their season. Liverpool have had successive wins after their worst run in 44 years, while the Tyne-siders switch from good to bad almost as quickly as Ruud Gullit flits from the Netherlands to the north-east.

A low was thoroughly explored on Saturday, and Gullit estimated Newcastle would not have scored if they had played for another hour against Leeds, but at least they have a player who makes Anfield fearful every time he sets foot in the place. A few Liverpool defenders will have seen Duncan Ferguson in their dreams last night and shuddered.

Not that Houllier was any-

thing but upbeat yesterday.

"The players have got to be aware that they have got 19 games in front of them, and if they want it individually and as a team, they can reach something," he said. "But they have got to keep that kind of spirit and that kind of work rate. I know their capabilities but it's one thing to say that I came here to win something with Liverpool and it's another to do the right thing for it."

Middlesbrough face a trip to Derby knowing that a point against Houllier's side would have set a new club record of 465 days since an away team won a league game at the Riverside Stadium. They, at least, are happy the congested programme gives them an early opportunity to make amends.

"If people thought we were going to go for another six months without losing a game, then I'm afraid they were mistaken," their captain, Andy Townsend, said. "The beauty with this particular one is that we've got 48 hours before we're at it again and we've got a chance to put it right."

Back to Kidd and a set of Blackburn players who have had to play at night twice over the holiday period, this time at Leicester.

"It's not humane playing again in 48 hours," Kidd said, "but that's the Premiership though, isn't it?"

"That is how you get injuries, through fatigue. It would not happen abroad." It would not. But do not expect the authorities to listen. They shoot horses, don't they?

International dies of heart attack aged 33

BY DAVE HADFIELD

ROY POWELL, one of rugby league's most respected players, has died suddenly at the age of 33.

Powell, capped 19 times by Great Britain between 1985 and 1991, suffered what is thought to have been a heart attack on his way to training at Rochdale Hornets yesterday and was pronounced dead on arriving at hospital.

A hard-working second-row and latterly prop forward, Powell made his name with Leeds, later moving to Bradford, Featherstone and Batley. This winter he joined Hornets, who have now lost two players in swift succession, following the death two months ago of Karl Marriot, also from a heart attack, at the age of 28.

Powell, who was given the nickname Bruno because of his likeness to the boxer, was one of the fittest players of his generation as well as one of the best-looking. Hugely popular at Leeds, he was taken by one of his coaches there, Peter Fox, to Bradford, where he held together an ageing pack until he became one of the casualties of a mass clear-out under the new coach Brian Smith in 1995.

That was the end of his career in the top division, but he lost none of his enthusiasm for the game. At Batley he had helped his old friend, Deryck Fox, with the coaching and was to do the same at Rochdale.

"He would have made a good coach, because he never lost his

temper," said his mentor, Peter Fox, yesterday. "I used to play hell with him, telling him that if he'd had a fraction of my aggression he'd have been a world-beater - but it just wasn't in him."

"He was a smashing lad who would do anything for anybody. On the field he would forage for ever. Whenever you needed him, he was there. He was a fantastic worker, but he could also release the ball - something he developed later in his career."

Although he was in the wrong places at the wrong times to win honours at club level - the Trans-Pennine Cup with Batley last season was an exception - he had some memorable days in Test match rugby, none better than the one in Australia in 1988.

The Great Britain touring party, 2-0 down in the series and badly hit by injuries, was being pilloried by a hostile Australian press.

Powell was part of the Great Britain pack that broke a 10-year drought by beating Australia 26-12 in Sydney, a win that ranks alongside the Rorke's Drift Test in 1914 and the 1958 Battle of Brisbane as British rugby league highpoints of tours Down Under.

He leaves a widow, Helen, and two children, four-year-old Lewis and Melissa, seven months old.

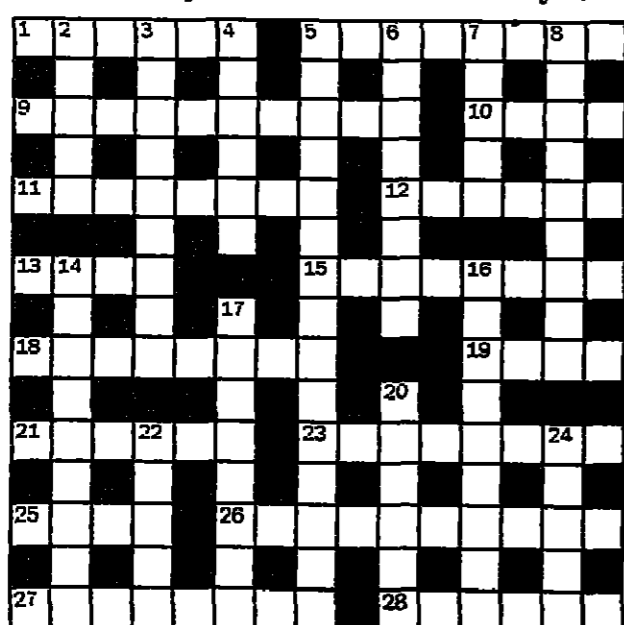


Another Harlequins' drive founders at the Stoop yesterday. The Londoners' one-dimensional tactics were nearly found wanting by a resurgent Sale. David Ashdown

THE MONDAY CROSSWORD

No 3804 Monday 28 December

by Portia



- ACROSS**
- Many unfortunately having money invested in US city (6)
 - Ready only to supply high quality material (8)
 - One like Christian, with time to make journey (10)
 - Spots daredevil (4)
 - Submitted to the Spanish guard (8)
 - Is depressed about being cast off (6)
 - Arrange hush money (4)
 - Pledge to provide protection (8)
 - Gripes about greeting Italian composer (8)
 - Communist currency, by the sound of it (4)
 - Count's seized by a love of god (6)
 - Polite expression of surprise (8)
 - Hear poem that's outstanding (4)
 - Qualified person accept-

- ing the German is physically fit (4-6)
- Cause lady to loose heart at once (8)
 - Angry outburst emanates from business unit inside (6)

DOWN

- Herb obtained in Japan is expensive (5)
- Beam trawler? (9)
- Notice European on fringes of circle is well-groomed (8)
- Cyril asks Helen about admitting good writer (7,8)
- Bird kept getting stuck in drain (8)
- Further added to society's conventions (5)
- Perfume of a sort we're distilling (9)
- Crush superior force (9)
- Memo about American self off (9)
- Number I allow out in the dark (8)
- Note extent of opening move (6)
- The French almost abandon plant (5)
- Done on purpose to cause capsize (5)

Sure-footed Schuster saves Quins' blushes

RUGBY UNION

BY TIM GLOVER

Harlequins 17
Sale 15

HAD HARLEQUINS lost this match, the Stoop last night would have been more desolate than a turkey farm. In one of the more curious encounters of the season, Quins entrusted almost all to their pack and the goal-kicking of John Schuster and very nearly came unstuck.

In the end Quins recorded their seventh win from their last eight Premiership games after seeing a 17-3 lead reduced to two points midway through the second half. Zinzan Brooke, the player-coach, clearly thought Sale was susceptible up front and, fuelled by a stream of penalties, Quins repeatedly went for the big drive, some times throwing threequarters into the rolling mauls, and repeatedly they were denied. On three occasions they lost the ball over the line.

One of the reasons for the Quins' run of form following a dismal start to the season has been the remarkable accuracy of Schuster. He was the first player in the Premiership to pass 200 points, landing 69 kicks out of 80, a phenomenal strike rate. Yesterday he kicked two penalties in the first five

minutes but missed three others before half-time when the home side led 9-3.

The first half had been almost exclusively confined to rolling mauls - Sale only got into the Quins' 22 twice in the first half hour - and Schuster kicking at goal.

Within a minute of the restart the complexion changed when Jamie Williams, probably the fastest full-back in the league, came into the Quins line, kicked ahead and got the touch-down, exploiting a mistake by his opposite number, Jim Mallinder.

When Schuster kicked a fourth penalty in the 53rd minute, Quins, unbeaten at home, were 14 points ahead. Within the space of a couple of minutes, Barrie-Jon Mather, the rugby league convert from Wigan, tore huge holes in the Quins' midfield defence. His first break resulted in a try for

Chris Yates and the second for Steve Hanley. Shane Howarth was narrowly wide with the first conversion but kicked the second to make it 17-15.

In the last five minutes he had two long-range penalty attempts, down-wind, to win the game but put the first to the right of the posts and the second to the left. It was noticeable that when the Sale stand-off took the second kick, Brooke got as close to the whites of Howarth's eyes as possible. Gamesmanship? It is what he is paid for.

"I'm just very relieved," John Gallagher, Quins' director of rugby, said. "We got away with it. We put in a great deal of effort but in the end we needed a bit of luck."

Sale were severely handicapped by an inability to guarantee their own line-out ball and on five occasions Phil Greening failed to find his jumper.

"I get annoyed with our naivety and lack of leadership," John Mitchell, the Sale coach, said. "We need an experienced pack leader and I've been saying that for a long time. It is about time the board took

notice. These are professional players and it is their job to deal with it on the field."

Mitchell, England's forward coach, said he was in the market place for a wise, although not necessarily old, head to direct his forwards.

He is not currently worried that Sale risk slipping into the bottom two of the table and having to face a battle with relegation, but admits that at present his side have no chance of honours.

"We are far too good a side to get involved in the bottom two places," the coach said. "We have a decent crop of players and some excellent youngsters but we just need that something extra."

Harlequins: Try Williams; Penalties Schuster (4). Sale: Tries Yates, Hanley. Conversion: Howarth; Penalties Howarth. Harlequins: J. Williams, D. O'Leary, D. O'Leary (capt), H. Hanley, K. Wright, 70; J. Lawrence, T. Murphy, G. Harpin (D. Barnes, 70), G. Uweylyn, G. Morgan (B. Dawson, 30), Z. Brooke, C. Sheehy, R. Jenkins. Sale: J. Mallinder (capt), M. Moore, B. J. Ellis, C. Yates, S. Hanley, S. Howarth, K. Ellis, D. Bell, P. Greening, P. Worsley (D. Williamson, 74), D. Baldwin, S. Mahood, P. Angles (A. Sanderson, 74), D. O'Leary, P. Neaghen, P. Sanderson. Referee: C. White (Gloucester).

More reports, results, page 19

هكذا من الامم

MONDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

Praise Be! It's Thora Hird

Thora Hird is a DBE, an OBE and a DLitt, and I point out to her that there are more letters after her name than there are in it. But Thora didn't get where she is today - London Television Centre, to be exact, in a sumptuous mink coat - by succumbing to flattery. "Yes I know, luv," she says. "And it's all very nice, but I scrubbed my mother's steps when I was younger, y'know."

Those Lancashire vowels are as raw as ever, even though Thora has lived for nigh on 60 years in a mews off London's Bayswater Road. I have to call her Thora, incidentally. "Hird" or even "Dame Thora" sounds all wrong for a woman, like Delia and Cilla, with whom the nation is on first-name terms.

On the day we meet, Thora has been collected in a posh car and delivered to London Television Centre for a screening of *Lost For Words*, Deric Longden's tear-jerking autobiographical drama in which she plays the ailing mum of a writer, played by Pete Postlethwaite. There are some saccharine moments, but *Lost For Words* is a treat all the same, and increasing frailty has not blunted Thora's superb comic timing. "Do you want to be buried, mum, or cremated?" asks Postlethwaite. "Oh I don't know, luv," she says. A tiny pause. It's all in the pause, "Surprise me."

Following the screening, which has reduced her to tears - "fancy crying at yer-yelf pretending" - Thora is wheeled into an adjoining room for our interview. She is at pains to tell me that she is not normally confined to a wheelchair, but is still recovering from a nasty fall. "Do you have a wife, luv?" Er, yes. "Well, she'll tell you that green beans are a bit stringy." A conversation with Thora Hird takes some surreal tangents, but she always gets there in the end. "I was taking the strings off and, when I thought I'd done enough, I turned round a bit quickly, and that's when I fell. I was nearly three weeks in the hospital. I couldn't get the circulation going in my foot. There's a big word for it."

At 87, Thora is beyond political correctness, hence her beloved mink coat and the assumption that de-stringing green beans is women's work. But there is nothing fuddyduddy about her. A week after our encounter, she was back at London Television Centre to appear on *This Morning*, and found herself in a lift with James Nesbitt, one of the stars of the racy relationship drama *Cold Feet*. Nesbitt hung his head while she scolded him about the amount of sex in *Cold Feet*. "I never miss it, though, luv," she added brightly.

She watches lots of television, and thinks there is far too much sex, but finds amusing rather than offensive. "Did you see that one about the prostates?" she asks. She means *Vice: The Sex Trade*, the ITV series in which a woman was seen breast-feeding a grown man. "What made me laugh was when the interviewer called her a prostitute and she said: 'One minute, I'm not a prostitute,' as though she was doing something more honourable by putting a nappy on a fella and giving him his supper. 'Excuse me, I'm not a prostitute.' Such dignity. I thought: 'Dear God, you've offended the prostitutes.'"

Thora chuckles. She loves playing to an audience, even an audience of one, and she has dressed for the occasion. The mink is removed, with some difficulty to reveal a smart black velvet trouser suit. She keeps her felt hat, which is speared with a huge pearl hat-pin. She is wearing shiny black sandals. Actually, she's a bit of an Imelda Marcos on the quiet, with 89 pairs of shoes. But her feet have swelled up since the fall, and she has to wear the sandals, which she loathes.

Thora takes great pride in her appearance. Her mottled hands are adorned with chunky rings, and she has long, polished fingernails. She is, in fact, quite a glampuss.

This is a little disconcerting, the opposite of spotting Joan Collins in an old kagoule. The screen Thora Hird - as seen in films like *All My Loving*, and TV sitcoms such as *In Loving Memory* and *Last of the Summer Wine* - tends to be a frumpily-dressed creature. Moreover, you don't see women in mink coats chugging up Stanah stairlifts, which she used to advertise on the telly, or presenting *Praise Be*, which she did for 17 years. And the incongruities don't stop there. Her daughter



Our favourite dame loves Beverly Hills but won't live there. 'There's no corner shop. You know what I mean, don't yer luv?' The Lancashire vowels are still raw and, at 87, she is beyond political correctness. By Brian Viner

is the former film starlet Janette Scott, who was once married to the singer Mel Tormé and still lives in Beverly Hills. Has she been to Beverly Hills?

"Oh yes. Twenty-four times. It's perfect for a holiday, but there's no corner shop. You know what I mean, luv, don't yer? They're very nice to me there. I must say. When they find out that I've played in the West End they say: 'Oh my Gaad.' She chuckles again. "Once, there was a director who thought of putting me in *Bonanza*, that show with thingummy [Lorne Greene]. I said: 'But my voice is Lancashire.' He said: 'That doesn't matter, we could have a cowboy whose mother comes from Lancashire.' What a laugh. From Lancashire."

From Morecambe, to be precise, where Thora Hird was born in May 1911. Her mother was an actress and her father was stage manager of the town's Royalty Theatre. "I first went on stage when I was eight weeks old as the illegitimate child of the village maiden, who was played by my mother," says Thora. I like to say that it was the only part I've ever got through influence."

She had a happy childhood, although the death of her older sister, Olga, killed by a motorbike on Morecambe promenade, cast a long shadow. "She was buried on the day she was six, and my mother never stopped saying to me, even when I grew up: 'Don't forget to look both ways.' Thora

sighs. She needs no prodding to talk about Morecambe in the Twenties and Thirties, and recalls the young Eric Bartholomew, who followed her into showbiz and changed his name. He used to quip that he took the name of his home town - Morecambe. Thora laughs at that one. "I knew him long before he became Eric Morecambe," she says. "But we weren't particular friends. He was younger than me: I'm 87, y'know."

Amazingly, she is still in touch with a gaggle of childhood friends, "although I had two less Christmas cards to write this year". Among her classmates were Vera Muff, Madge Peel, Ada Lob and Maudie Poles. "You can't believe names like that, can yer? When I worked with Freddie Prin-

ton on (the Sixties sitcom) *Meet The Wife*, I could finish him off just by mentioning those names."

At 17, Thora Hird became a cashier at the Lancaster and District Co-op, an unlikely stand-in for Rada, yet the Co-op was effectively her drama school. "I used to look at some of the customers and think, 'if I ever take up acting seriously, I'll play her.' I've played nearly all of them now. People say to me: 'That woman was so lifelike.' I say: 'She is, she lives in Morecambe.'"

In 1931, she joined Morecambe rep, earning £1 a week playing a succession of maids. Her big break was engineered by another Lancastrian, George Formby, who was already a big star when he saw her in

a play called *As You Are*. "He said to me: 'Ee you were good, I want the studios to see you.' So afterwards, a white £5 note was delivered to cover her fare to London, and she arrived at Ealing Studios on the day war broke out."

"I got there just as the alert went, and even the man on the gate ran for it, so I followed everyone into the shelter and sat next to a woman from the restaurant who was shelling peas. All I could think was that I'd be late for my appointment. I didn't realise that everyone would be down there."

Like many people of her age, Thora's recollection of events 60-odd years ago is astonishing, even though she can be a little shaky on what happened yesterday. She tells me in extraordinary detail about a wartime incident on the platform of Oxford Circus Tube station, the gist being that an "inebriated" GI asked her how much she charged for sexual favours, and she replied: "I don't know, what do your mother and sister charge?" which made him cry. That anecdote reveals a side to the real Thora Hird that we sometimes see on screen, a sharp tongue and a caustic wit.

Latterly, her most cantankerous characters have been invented by Victoria Wood. She was wonderfully bad-tempered in a fleeting cameo in Wood's BBC1 sitcom, *Dinnerladies*, and downright nasty in the comedy-drama *Pat and Margaret*. "I think Victoria Wood is brilliant. Do you remember when that woman in *Pat and Margaret* found out that her mild-mannered son had had sex in her house? 'Not on my elderdown,' she said. That's one of my favourite lines."

Another favourite line was written, not surprisingly, by her favourite writer, Alan Bennett. "I can't recall the name of the play just now, but I played a woman who had to ask her son what the word 'lesbian' meant. 'It's women who sleep together, mum,' he said. 'Oh,' she said. 'Me and your Auntie Phyllis always slept together during the air raids.' That's marvellous, isn't it? Bennett is brilliant. You'd have to be very poor not to do something with his words."

Thora knows, I suspect, that she is selling herself short. Ten years ago, in Bennett's *Talking Heads*, she gave a remarkably moving performance in *Cream Cracker Under The Sofa*, and was no less affecting in the best of this year's *Talking Heads 2: Waiting For The Telegram*.

"He's not a fussy man, Bennett," she says. "When I'd done it, he just put his arm round my shoulders and said: 'Oh thank you.' It took me about a fortnight to learn and you have to learn it well because Bennett will tell you if you say 'it' and it's 'but'. That's what keeps my mind active, learning lines, and that's why I shall go on. But it's harder than it used to be. Jimmy was always on the book, you see."

She means Jimmy Scott, her husband of 56 years, who helped her learn her lines. He died four years ago, following a massive stroke, and Thora's matter-of-fact recollection of the day he collapsed could almost have been scripted by Alan Bennett.

"I've a lot of copper pans in my kitchen and I thought one had fallen on the floor. He'd fallen backwards into the bath and I'm ashamed to say I didn't know it was a stroke. I thought he'd fainted. I phoned my neighbour, Robert Kelly, the American painter of nudes and trees. Brilliant. He's a big man. But he was out. His wife called the ambulance and they took Jimmy to St Mary's Hospital where they're so prompt. I don't think. He was picked up at 25 past nine in the morning, and at 12 o'clock they put him in a ward. But I doubt it would have made a difference."

"The strokes organisations have been so wonderful to me since then, I can't tell you, and I've been helping them raise money. I went to open a new place in Staffordshire, and another in Hull, and while I was having drinks with the Reverend this or that, a man came over and said: 'Can I have a word with you, Thora?' We had a conversation and the next day a lady said 'Do you remember that man you talked to last night. It was the first time he's spoken for four years.'"

Thora shakes her head at the wonder of it all. In *Lost For Words*, very poignantly, her character has a massive stroke. "I don't mind telling you, luv, that I wept when I read the script," she says. And then she turns to her nurse, who has sat in on the interview. "I think it's time to go, luv," she says. "Will you fetch my mink?"

'Lost For Words' is on ITV on 3 January

INSIDE

Letters	2
Leaders	3
Comment	4

Obituaries	5
Features	6
Arts	7

Network	8-9
Listings	10
Radio	11

Satellite & Cable TV	11
Games	11
Today's TV	12

NETWORK

2/COMMENT AND LETTERS

Mandelson is wrong

Sir: Peter Mandelson says in his letter of resignation: "...I do not believe I have done anything wrong or improper. But I should not, with all candour, have entered into the arrangement."

Wrong, on both counts. If Peter Mandelson can secure finance at advantageous terms why should he not purchase a house that he wants in the area he wants?

It is not the house purchase, the value of the house or the method of its financing which is crucial. What is central to the whole affair is disclosure or, more accurately, lack of disclosure.

By failing to disclose his arrangement with Geoffrey Robinson (and there were many opportunities to do so) he allows the public to conclude quite reasonably that there is something to hide.

Politicians are accountable to the voters, who can only make an informed choice if all the facts are known. Concealment is to treat the electorate with contempt. Mandelson is to be applauded for resigning and for doing so quickly but he is wrong to suggest he has done nothing wrong or improper.

MICHAEL C WARREN

Sheffield

Sir: Just two days before Christmas, the season of good will to all men, another of our public figures has found out that such courtesies are rarely shown to politicians who make mistakes.

Since before the last election, Peter Mandelson has been a figure of hate for the press, Opposition and even some within the Labour Party. I had no particular opinion of Mr Mandelson before this event. But the all-too-familiar character assassination he has been subjected to over the last couple of days has left me feeling a great deal of sympathy for him.

For the sake of those who were so quick in judging him, and in the spirit of the season, I hope that they have no skeletons they would rather keep hidden. I also wish that we could all learn to be more understanding and tolerant of the mistakes of others.

TOBIAS MELIA

Crawley, West Sussex

Sir: I can't help reflecting that it would probably take a lot more than a third of a million pounds to cause the downfall of a Conservative minister.

KEVIN HOLLIDAY

Aberdeen

Sir: Peter Mandelson was wise to avoid the final responsibility for the Millennium Dome, but did he have to go to these lengths?

PETER REYNOLDS

Southport, Merseyside

Seasonal theology

Sir: One of the more tedious aspects of Christmas is the half-baked theology paraded by people who should know better.

Your leading article on 24 December claims that Jesus preached "all people are equal". If you read the Bible you will see he preached no such thing. And neither, until recently, did the Church.

Stranger still, you say the birth of Christ represents "the triumph of human creativity". The Son of God born of a virgin - human creativity? And have you not noticed Christianity teaches that triumph and creativity belong to God and insists humans should be humble?

You have taken the humanist values you share with your readers and then reached for some religious touches to dress them up. But Christian ideas do not fit them, which perhaps explains why churches are so empty.

DAVID BISHOP

Brussels

Sir: Many adults do still "experience a feeling of great personal satisfaction from the simple act of being seasonally nice to someone" (letter, 18 December).

In our area a group of volunteers takes over the kitchen of a local school to cook, serve and share a Christmas dinner with

about 60 local residents who would otherwise be lonely on Christmas day. Others help to man the homeless shelter, or deliver meals on wheels or carry out countless regular visits in support of the elderly, sick or disabled.

Whatever his needs or skills, I'm quite sure Mr Welch's local volunteer centre would be delighted to hear from him at any time of the year.

Merry Christmas.

FRANCES PENFOLD

Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

Duty-free bonanza

Sir: Your leading article (12 December) and various articles concerning the "duty-free pantomime" continue to overlook one of the most important aspects of the issue. There are political and employment aspects, but the key factor is money.

Duty-free retailing is fabulously profitable. The price charged is certainly not the normal retail price less the normal duty. Operating ferries, airlines or airports at those profit margins would be impossible. One can buy a litre of duty-free brandy in a normal shop in Spain for about £5. To buy a bottle of the same brandy in a duty-free store in England costs about £15.

The only real test of whether jobs may be lost is not counting those people employed in the duty-free industry but to ask "will people drink less, smoke less, use less perfume, have a smaller wardrobe and so on if they cannot buy them at duty-free prices?" and I guess the answer is "no". And will travellers from abroad not wish to take home souvenirs from the country they visit, such as a bottle of scotch from the UK if they have to pay normal shop prices? I guess they will. So on the production and distribution side there should be not much change.

The other money issue concerns the Government. Rates of duty in the UK are so high and generate such an income stream for the Treasury that they have no

desire to reduce them in line with Europe. To do that would leave a gap in the revenue which would have to be filled with a compensating rise in other taxes.

We should be allowed to buy any products we want, wherever we want in Europe, at whatever price we are willing to pay, take them anywhere and do what we like with them, including selling them.

This duty-free situation is a true pantomime and, like all pantomimes, it should end after Christmas.

PHILIP EDWARDS-KER

Weybridge, Surrey

The name game

Sir: Your story about the Norwegian woman jailed for giving her son a name which is not on the country's approved list ("Jail for giving son illegal name", 24 December) prompted me to give thought to current trends in the names given to children in the UK.

The enthusiasm for hyphenated forenames, Emily-Jade, John-Paul, Lori-Lee etc. seems to be on the wane and has been replaced by parents personalising children's names through variations of spelling or pronunciation.

My understanding, which I assume was mistaken, was that Registrars of Births were required to advise parents on the usual

spellings of the chosen name for their child.

I wonder if they are actually creating confusion and difficulty for the owners of the names in an attempt to create something individual and personal.

Teachers are now frequently confused by the plethora of individual spellings, or by the non-standard pronunciation of well-established names.

Individual spellings which I have encountered recently include Danyell (Danielle), Kattie (Katie or Katy), Jayde (Jade), Mikala (Michaela), Ashlee (Ashley), Amii and Aimee (Amy), Lynnett (Lynnette), I presume, rather than Linnet).

I'm not sure who is more confused. Is it me, the ageing teacher, who is struggling to spell or pronounce the children's names according to the parents' wishes; or is it the children themselves, who have to explain their names each time they encounter a new teacher and are likely to have to do so throughout their lives?

I have no objection to adults choosing to call themselves by whatever name they wish, but I think there needs to be some care and discretion in naming children - though not to the extent of jailing errant parents.

PHILIP PARKIN

Grimsby, Lincolnshire

IN BRIEF

Sir: The Archbishop of Canterbury's comments that recent air strikes on Iraq were a "sad necessity" ("Carey backs the use of force", 23 December) seem singularly inappropriate, given both his office and the Christmas season. I had thought that the time of Christian leaders sanctioning wars were far behind us in a less civilised age.

Perhaps at this time of peace and goodwill to all men Dr Carey would be wise to confine his message to safer Christian themes such as "thou shalt not kill" and leave the approval of such matters to the conscience of our elected representatives.

MARK WOODWARD

London E15

Sir: Andrew Marshall ("Allies split over banana war", 23 December) says that in the current USA vs Europe trade dispute "the casualty count will be lower" than in the attack on Iraq.

Not true, of course: if

Our sterile gardens

Sir: Your correspondent on the disappearance of songbirds (letter, 16 December) has isolated the wrong predator, but identified one area offering great potential for sustaining our wild bird population. It is effectively a national park in our own back gardens.

In our desire to create the ideal home and garden, we have succeeded only in creating a barren and sterile environment. In urban and rural areas alike, we renovate and destroy. We remove food sources, safe shelter and potential nest sites. We use chemicals that kill.

A house I knew as a child had a large garden which provided food and cover enough for high-density populations of birds and mammals, both common and not so common. Even a hare reared her leverets there. But the place has been developed, the garden built upon, the outbuildings converted. The birds and animals have gone.

By contrast, close by, and therefore subject to the same environmental factors (including predation), there is an unconverted farm. It has rambling buildings, barns and a large manure heap. It offers a constant source of food and shelter and remains a paradise for birds, predator and prey alike.

I am not advocating dilapidation of our gardens and houses, simply that we learn to remedy what we have destroyed. The nest-feeder and nest-box are no longer sufficient. We cannot remain complacent or shift the blame elsewhere. Predator and prey alike have an equal place and demand our attention and care.

MARILYN DAVIES

Gargrave, North Yorkshire

What children need

Sir: Children's mental health needs (letter, 22 December) are indeed different to those of adults, and we share Peter Wilson's concern on this subject. Attachment Disorder is recognised by the World Health Organisation as a serious, relatively fixed emotional and behavioural disturbance in a child whose early attachment relationships were abnormal.

Policies that encourage all-day creches, nursery hotels etc ignore the abnormality of this care for babies and infants. Babies are not herd animals and in the early years require consistent one-to-one care, preferably by their mothers, who are uniquely equipped for this vital, undervalued job.

Research evidence and common sense support this view, yet the Government continues to support alternative child-care, ignoring the army of mothers who would prefer to care for their own babies at home if they were supported financially and socially to do so.

Families would also need reassurance that a work re-entry system was in place for mothers once their children started school.

While the emotional needs of children during their crucial first three years are misunderstood or ignored, adult Attachment Disorder tragedies will increase.

SUE CLASEN

Chairman

What About The Children

Pershore, Hereford and

Worcestershire

Humanity for Iraq

Sir: Your correspondent Robert Fisk has been trying, seemingly in vain, to remind Britain and America that the policies they are pursuing towards the Arabs of the Middle East are misguided and wrong.

Now Mr Blair and company talk about keeping Saddam Hussein in a cage, but has it never occurred to them that caging an angry man only adds to his fury, which will be in nobody's interest?

Perhaps the leaders of the United States and Britain might, during this season of goodwill, reflect on and heed the advice given by a truly good man shared by both countries, William Penn of England and Pennsylvania: "For if men did see we love them, we should soon find they would not harm us. Force may subdue but love gains, and he that forgives first wins the laurel."

Perhaps a little understanding and humane treatment of Iraq, together with some honest evaluation of the problem in the Middle East, will let all out of their cages.

Or are such sentiments and hopes alien to the scheming natures of the present-day leaders of the western world?

I R RASMY

Horniton,

Devon

Sir: I have recently returned from Baghdad, where for one-and-a-half years it was my job to report the progress of the humanitarian Oil for Food programme.

Ministers and senior members of the Opposition frequently state that the Iraqi leadership have diverted supplies under this programme. This is a serious error.

Some 150 international observers, travelling throughout Iraq, reported to the United Nations Multidisciplinary Observer Unit, of which I was the head. At no time was any diversion recorded. I made this clear in our reports to the UN Secretary General, and he reported in writing to the Security Council accordingly.

In the case of private donations outside the Oil for Food programme, those which arrived by air were observed by us, and no diversion was recorded. Humanitarian supplies arriving by road were not within our remit, although my contact with the Iraqi Red Crescent, which has a co-ordination role, would suggest no diversion.

With regard to private medical donations, again nothing directly to do with the Oil for Food programme, there has sometimes been confusion. All supplies, in accordance with international practice, should have been vetted before distribution by the government testing authority, Kimadia. (Some supplies, in ignorance, tried to avoid this). I know of more than one occasion when outdated medicines arrived, and Kimadia was naturally reluctant for them to be distributed.

Bombing Iraq is a matter of the utmost seriousness, in particular in view of the civilian casualties. It is imperative at the very least that our facts are correct.

MICHAEL STONE

Polruan,

Cornwall

Roundly irritating

Sir: The latest complaint in The Irritations of Modern Life wrongly refers to "round robins" (Review, 23 December).

A round robin is not a circular letter from one person to several people. It is a collective letter from several people to one person, usually in the form of a protest or petition about a grievance, with the signatures arranged in a circle so that no one's name appears at the top, in order to avoid the victimisation of ringleaders.

One of the most irritating irritations of modern life is the way people get this kind of thing wrong.

ANNA FREEMAN

Leighton Buzzard,

Bedfordshire

My recipe for surviving the Twelve Days after Christmas

WE GET a lot of advice about the run-up to Christmas - cooking, last minute shopping, etc - but no advice at all on what to do in the aftermath, no post-Christmas counselling as it were.

So in this ground-breaking column I am going to talk you through the wind-down from Christmas Day to Twelfth Night, detailing what exactly happens on each day, so that you can tick things off as they occur.

(I am assuming that I am addressing a thoroughly typical British family: that is a single parent with partner, 1.5 children, two relations you remember inviting and five you don't.)

First Night
All the presents are opened and all the food eaten, except the nuts, Turkish delight, half the turkey etc,

etc. Paracetamol all gone, though. One of you says: "Well, that's all over, then, thank God". The other says: "Not by a long chalk".

The phone rings. It's a relation in a far-off country. "Belinda!" you cry. "Happy Christmas! We tried to ring earlier, but all lines were busy."

You know you have to thank Belinda for a present, but you can't remember off-hand what it is, so you mouth to your partner: "What did I get from Belinda?"

Your partner thinks you are saying: "Have you switched off the blender?" goes to have a look and never comes back.

Second Night
You find a present under the Christmas Tree which nobody has opened and which has no label on it. Nobody recognises it.

A child says to you: "I can't make this toy work. Can you make it work for me?" You can't.

The smell of turkey stock is heard in the land. Third Night
Your partner says: "Have you seen that list I made of who gave which present to whom?" You haven't.

Fourth Night
You prepare to dispose of all the wrapping paper, but think you should go through it first in case you find any valuables. You don't.

Fifth Night
You wake up convinced that you watched *The Mollusc* on TV last night and understood everything that happened. This is clearly impossible. You go back to sleep.

A grand expedition to the bottle bank is mounted. A small glass ornament falls off

the tree and breaks. The dog tries to eat it.

In a quiet moment, you say to your partner: "Never again". Your partner says: "Never".

You don't actually define which bit of Christmas you're talking about. Sixth Night
Still no sign of the return of the grand expedition to the bottle bank. Should you tell someone?

Three cards arrive in the post, two from people you didn't send cards to, and one from someone you sent a card to, and who obviously sent one off to you in return, too late.

First attempt to change presents which were too big, too small, or too tight under the arms. Someone says: "I wonder if we should phone the vet about the dog and the glass, just in case?"

Seventh Night
Bottle bank expedition returns,

saying that they couldn't find a bottle bank anywhere which wasn't full, but they got invited to a very good party by some people who were also trying to dump bottles and sort of stayed on for a day or two.

Someone says: "Talking of parties, when were we invited round to the Galloways?"

Someone else says: "Oh my God, it was last night."

Eighth Night
Turkeyburgers for lunch again. First heavy fall of Christmas tree needles.

Dog eats unopened present. Looks like a scarf. Ninth Night
At lunch, someone says: "Are these turkeyburgers again?"

You say: "Certainly not - they're brussel sproutburgers."

Go to visit relatives you are dreading seeing, never suspecting they are dreading seeing you.

Tenth Night
In a quiet moment, you say to your partner: "It wasn't that bad, actually". Your partner says: "Could have been a lot worse." Yes, memory is starting to play tricks already.

Eleventh Night
Worried about the dog again, after the discovery of a strange pile of detritus which suggests dog is leaving very strange droppings, perhaps as result of scarf poisoning.

Dog worries are over - the detritus is identified as left-overs from mullied wine.

Twelfth Night
Partner gets call from Belinda, and says to you later: "Did you ever get that scarf from Belinda?"

You say: "Ah! I think the dog ate it."



MILES KINGTON
In this ground-breaking column I'll talk you through the wind-down to Twelfth Night

the tree and breaks. The dog tries to eat it.

In a quiet moment, you say to

The pe
enou

THE INDEPENDENT

1 CANADA SQUARE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON E14 5DL TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000 FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171 345 2435
THE INDEPENDENT ON THE INTERNET: WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Mr Blair's faith in his 'project' may well be misplaced

MINISTERS MAY fall, but the "Project New Labour" is still steaming ahead, said Tony Blair yesterday, before jetting off to the Seychelles for his place in the sun. He should be so lucky.

In the first place, Mr Mandelson isn't just any minister. He is the key member of the team that created "New Labour", or at least the Blairite revolution as defined in the world of sound-bites, focus groups and rhetoric. In his absence, Mr Blair has not only lost a close supporter but one whose weight - and access to the Prime Minister - shaped the balance of power in the Government. Without him, other forces are bound to move to fill the vacuum, in an air already poisoned by accusations that his downfall was plotted in the court of Chancellor Gordon Brown. As history has shown repeatedly, the way to wound a king is always by hurting the closest adviser.

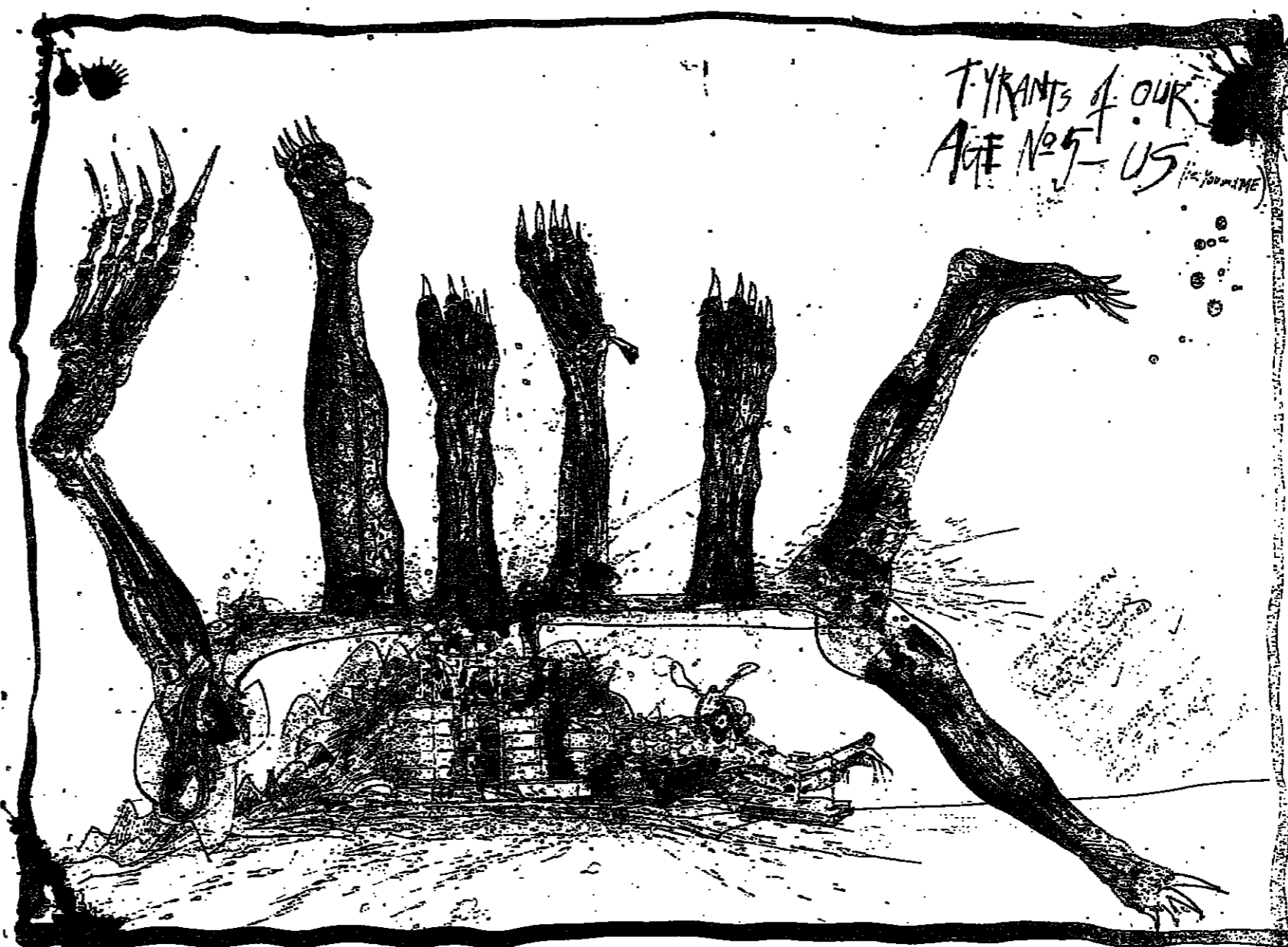
And as Mr Brown moves in from one direction, his opponents are closing in from others. The combination of John Prescott and Robin Cook, which we report today, is not just an alliance of the previously marginalised in the Labour Cabinet. It could mark the resurgence of that significant group in Labour which has never been fully committed to Mr Blair's cherished vision.

Which brings in the other point. "Project New Labour" was fine as a slogan for opposition, a standard by which the forces of the left could present a more reassuring and modern face to the voting public. But Labour isn't in opposition anymore. It is in government - 18 months into government, indeed. And it will be defined by what it does with power.

In that sense the Prime Minister could understandably argue in his radio interview yesterday that all this concentration on personalities is out of proportion. It is education, the economy and health which matter and those will have to be dealt with whether or not Mandelson or Robinson are present in government. But appearances do matter today.

Peter Mandelson didn't resign because he broke the rules of ministerial behaviour. He went because, after a day of trying to justify his behaviour, it became apparent that the press and the public weren't going to wear it. So as his rivals feud and bicker like so many medieval barons, the man who most understood New Labour is in exile.

Now comes the great test for the Government, the one on which all governments ultimately succeed or fail: namely, the test of competence. Far from this being just a case of a minister who did wrong, who resigned and "it's over", as Mr Blair argued yesterday, his problems of prime ministerialship are only just beginning. Can we suggest a biography of Harold Wilson as his holiday reading in the Seychelles?



Negotiations will help Sierra Leone, not guns

JUST WHEN the cause of African democracy seemed to be improving with the developments towards early elections in Nigeria, it has been set back on its heels again in Sierra Leone, where a rebel force seems once more determined to bring down the democratically-elected government there. The fact that the West African contingent of troops sent in there to preserve democracy is led by the Nigerians only makes it worse; still more so that the government was armed by British companies with the

apparent connivance of our own Government. As Tony Blair said earlier in the year, it may have all been in a noble cause. But noble causes don't help the tens of thousands of civilians who have become, once again, the victims of the latest upsurge in violence.

The problem in Sierra Leone is, yet again, the presence of minerals and the nature of the land. Just as in Angola, or Zaire, military intervention can defend the towns, but so long as the rebels in the country can have access to diamonds or other goods, then they can survive and arm themselves. Should we then despair? The answer has to be no. No, because the West has to bear some responsibility for what goes on in the Forgotten Continent, not least because its purchases still fuel the funds of rebellion, while its arms exports give the means of revolt. Where the Ango-

la crisis has drawn in the armies of five different African nations and threatens to set off the first all-African war this century, Sierra Leone has not drawn in its neighbours in the same way. Intervention has been organised regionally and multi-nationally through the Economic Community of West African States (Ecomog), which is to meet again today to consider the situation.

Fighting could still get a great deal worse. But that is surely the lesson of Sierra Leone, just as it is of Kosovo. Immediate solutions are not always readily available. The responsibility of the outside world is not to meddle, still less to try to change the military power by arming one side or another. It is to promote stability by negotiation through the offices of international organisations and to keep on doing so even when the fighting appears to be eternal.

The people's trust may no longer be enough to solve Blair's dilemma

LIKE TS ELIJAH's nifty malleasant Macavity, Geoffrey Robinson, the catalyst of so much Government mayhem, stole away quietly from the scene of the commotion at the end of 1998, murmuring something about it being time to go while looking as if he had not the faintest idea why everyone around him was so worked up.

Meanwhile, Peter Mandelson spent Christmas at his mum's, where he was photographed looking strangely vulnerable, as men do around Christmas when they are wearing a very new water. It would be unfair of Mr Mandelson to say that nothing in his political life became him like the leaving of it. But by going quickly and, even more importantly, with good grace, he has stored up some blessings for himself. The precedents for ousted ministers returning to Cabinet are not good. But Mr Mandelson has broken more than one precedent in his career. He'll be back.

The departures of Mandelson and Robinson were a kind of bonfire of the vanities. Two separate but inter-linked dramatic plots inside New Labour detonated simultaneously. The Brownites and the Blairites in New Labour's simmering internal feud lost a player each. Despite the greater importance of Mr Mandelson, it is the Brownites who will take the harder loss. None dare call it treason, yet there are a lot of very disruptive questions about why news of the private loan surfaced and how much Mr Robinson's offers of largesse were intended to shore up an alternative power-base grouped around the Chancellor.

In 1998, the Brown camp lost the

Chancellor's loyal namesake Nick Brown from the strategically significant position of Chief Whip. No 10 will continue the purge by ensuring that the next Paymaster General is far less colourful than Mr Robinson and nowhere near as doggedly devoted to Gordon Brown.

The Prime Minister, albeit by an unexpected and circuitous route, gets back the state of affairs he described after the election as "Peter going on being Peter", which means Peter being on call for Tony when Tony has an election campaign to plan and the pro-Euro campaign to sort out. If ever there were a time when Mr Blair needed a spare brain unencumbered by ministerial cares, this is it.

The third year in office is the time when we can reasonably ask which of the Government's plans are on course and which have gone walkabout. 1997 was an undisputed triumph - the year of walking on water. 1998 has seen him forced to start swimming, like any other mortal leader. As a result of his own miscalculation, Mr Blair lost a difficult but bright moderniser in Frank Field and a not-so-bright, but still admired personality in Harriet Harman. Welfare reform has returned to a rather more sedate pace than the advance billing announced. Meanwhile, the New Deal, the flagship of New Labour's policies, is ambulating along as Government employment-schemes do: patchily successful, relatively expensive. It will be sorely tested if the economy obliges the nation's Cassandras and really does go into a bad recession next year. On Europe, Mr Blair has been forced,



ANNE McELVOY

The third year is when we can ask which government plans are on course and which have gone walkabout

by some rather ragged diplomacy from the German government, to defend his *de facto* policy of British entry into the single currency and drop the pretence that he is still waiting and seeing. The starting signal for the British referendum battle has been given in Bonn. Mr Blair has no choice but to allow the argument to rage in the run-up to the next election. Mr Mandelson is now the obvious figurehead for the "yes" camp. His presence would demand that the opponents of EMU find an equally persuasive and professional candidate to oppose him in the war of the television studios.

A great deal of Mr Blair's popularity is down to his ability to combine an unstilted and understanding manner with statesmanship. The combination has served him well in the run-up to the Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland. But the end of the year

approaches, the deadlines come and go, and there has been no IRA de-commissioning. This state of affairs is becoming intolerable for even moderate Unionists. Without some republican gesture by the next Good Friday, Mr Blair will have trouble convincing doubters that the peace process is more than a grand exercise in wishful thinking.

We still await real information of how effective the last bombing of Iraq was. Mr Blair was stuck with the US policy of air power without a commitment to send in troops. In military terms, this is an extremely dodgy proposition. Saddam had to be bombed, said Mr Clinton and Mr Blair in unison. So bombed he was and is now "back in his cage". I have noted before that when the Prime Minister uses unadorned the tabloid language of his spokesman Alastair Campbell, something is not quite right. Saddam is not back in his cage and will not be so until he is dead or overthrown.

The Government remains caught between the traditional Atlanticism which defines Blair's defence and security policies and the pro-Europeanism which is the mood music of New Labour and the underpinning of his pro-EMU stance. It will be very difficult for him to partake in any further Anglo-American military action without opening a split with the EU.

Anyway, the domestic battlefield provides challenges enough. The Scots and Welsh vote on their new assemblies in May. It seems unlikely to me that the Scottish Nationalists will oust Labour, as some in the party high command fear. The real problems for

Labour in Scotland begin if they are elected as the single largest party. The pressure to challenge Westminster for more power and to strike out in a more overtly Old Labour direction will be considerable. In Wales, Mr Blair may yet find that there are no means fair or foul to rid himself of the disgustingly chirpy and very unreconstructed Rhodri Morgan. The European elections offer a rescue rope to William Hague, who will profit from the introduction of the PR system he opposes. Labour will lose a lot of seats, which does not matter much of itself, but will be the first sign that the party is vulnerable to the slings and arrows of elections.

Politics is more than the sum of its parts. Successful leaders need to preserve the sense of living through events with the electorate and of sharing the same joys and woes. The pressures of the last year have seen Mr Blair becoming more distant from the rest of us.

Sometimes, in the edge of my political vision, I have the sense that the Prime Minister is disappearing. Too often, it is his Government colleagues who are making the news and he who provides the damage limitation, as he showed yesterday in a rather uncomfortable defence of Mr Mandelson. We see less of him where he is at his spontaneous best and more presidential mode of interviews and formal addresses.

He has not yet forfeited that most precious of political commodities: instinctive trust. But he must be aware that it is vulnerable, and that without it, the noblest intentions turn swiftly to dust.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I really don't go round asking my Cabinet members how they paid for their houses."
Tony Blair,
Prime Minister

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The unexamined life is not worth living."
Socrates,
Greek philosopher

Falling behind with the rent?

Shelterline

0800 800 4444

call free any time of the day or night

FOR THE time being, Peter Mandelson is damaged goods. his arrogance and recklessness has done incalculable damage to the Government. And it isn't over yet.

But lessons can be learned. Honesty and humility would be two good new resolutions for New Labour.
Sunday Mirror

PETER MANDELSON had to resign from Tony Blair's Cabinet for unwisely accepting a

huge loan from Geoffrey Robinson, then keeping quiet about it. But a man of his flair and commitment shouldn't be sidelined for long. An early return to government is out of the question. But there is one role he is uniquely qualified for: making sure the Millennium Dome is a roaring success when it opens a year from now.
Sunday People

IT LOOKS increasingly as though the big idea behind the

MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
The Sunday tabloids comment on Peter Mandelson's resignation

"Third Way" is to have no big idea beyond that of winning and retaining power through presentation. That the very architect of the strategy has himself crashed to earth is an

object lesson Mr Blair should take to heart.
The Mail on Sunday

IT WOULD be a tragedy if there were any more victims of this

sorry affair. With a New Year approaching, the PM should tell his feuding ministers to get on with the business of government. We would have hoped that Labour had learned the lessons of the John Major years, that when ministers rip each other apart, the Government descends into chaos and incompetence.

We expect better from this Government. The events of the past week have badly damaged confidence in its ability to

deliver. So, new year, new start please.
The Express on Sunday

MAKE NO mistake, we have not seen the last of Mr M. Will he take us into Europe or pop up elsewhere on the political scene? Has he ruled out wanting to be the first mayor of London? Whatever it is, he will surely be a wiser, and humbler, man when the moment comes. And that is no bad thing.
News of the World

BT

IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT:

- paying your rent or mortgage
- problems with your landlord
- being repossessed
- being homeless because of violence
- the conditions you live in
- having nowhere to sleep tonight

Shelter

Minicom and translation services available. Calls are confidential but may be recorded for training purposes. Registered charity number 263720.

4/COMMENT

RIGHT OF REPLY

PHILLIP KNIGHTLEY



The author and Notting Hill resident takes issue with our coverage of his neighbourhood

NOTTING HILL Gate, where I have lived for the past 40 years, is a very different place than the one portrayed in *The Independent* during the Peter Mandelson affair. There may be a few stars of politics, stage, screen, radio, TV, the modelling and fashion world who have chosen Notting Hill - often in the hope of a quiet time - but there are also a lot of hard-working, ordinary people just getting on with their lives who are none too happy to see their neighbourhood described as "exclusive... chic... fashionable... trendy..."

We all came here because of pleasant, tree-lined streets, tasteful, understated architecture, not much traffic, good public transport, and - at the time - reasonable prices. And even before Lady Porter, Westminster City Council would give you a generous home loan with interest at 6.5 per cent fixed for all the 25-year period, and then offer you a grant or two to help refurbish the place. Was this a suspect deal? Should I have registered it?

We stayed because the cosmopolitan nature of the area represented multi-cultural London at its best. There are restaurants of 17 different national cuisines within five minutes walk. The local junior school, Hallfield, counted 26 different nationalities among its pupils when my three kids were there - the broadest cultural mix in the country.

We even enjoyed the notoriety the area once had - Christine Keeler, "Lucky" Gordon (I had a Christmas card for him from Jamaica just the other day), the Mangrove café in All Saints Road (the best flying fish in London), and the excitement of the biggest street carnival in Europe.

All right, everything in the area is now expensive. A house is going to cost you half a million, an ordinary drink at the Cobden - once a working men's club, now a chic members-only night-spot - is £4. But Notting Hill is not exclusive. It remains, as it has always done, an inclusive area, a real melting pot.

Moreover, all things considered, we get on well with each other. As the kids at Hallfield sing every morning:

And the creed and the colour and the name don't matter, When I needed a neighbour you were there. Precisely.

The cherry-flavoured way to perfect health

"WHY?" ENQUIRED my friend, examining the white package on my kitchen table, "are you stirring cherry-flavoured chicken sternum cartilage into your coffee?"

"I should have thought that was obvious," I replied tartly (health food always makes me irritable), "particularly to someone like yourself in the medical profession." My friend is a doctor. "Well, tell me anyway," he said. And when I got my breath back, I did.

I should explain that even mixed with finest Jamaican Blue Mountain, cherry-flavoured chicken sternum cartilage tastes so appalling that, for a minute or so after I'd swallowed it, my entire system shut down. Half-an-hour later he had heard the whole sorry story and wasn't impressed, but then that usually is the way with NHS doctors when it comes to alternative medicine.

For the last year I have been a slave, as they say, to arthritis. I can't play Chopin or Joplin anymore, my



SUE ARNOLD

The allergist's room at the back of the shop looked less like a clinic than a fairground booth

fingers won't stretch that far. I can't run round the park because my trainers feel like horse shoes. Only my family and close friends know of my suffering for I am not one to complain. Nor do I believe in bur-

dering others with my problems - unless, of course, they say how are you when I tell them in some detail about my condition.

To cut a long story short, I've tried everything - drugs, exercise, acupuncture, cod liver oil, prayer - no dice. It was my piano teacher who suggested that I might be allergic to something. She's so clever. She found me a whole bunch of tight-fisted Mozart sonatas to play instead of my usual repertoire of waltzes and rags and I'm struggling on. Anyway, she told me about this marvellous allergy-testing clinic in Putney where all you do is eat nothing for 24 hours then go first thing in the morning without even cleaning your teeth so that there's no trace, even of toothpaste, in your system. I balked a little at the prospect of boarding a Number 22 bus with unbrushed teeth, but needs must and I telephoned for an appointment.

"Good as New," said the woman at the other end. "Is this the aller-

gy clinic?" I said. "No, it's a second-hand designer dress exchange," she replied. "The clinic's moved to Putney, but I'll give you the number." From where we live, Putney is a doddle. Purley is a schlep. The good news was that I could clean my teeth. "We at the One Earth clinic prefer to test synergistically with essential oils," explained Kadisha the Putney allergist, a dark, handsome woman swathed in fringed shawls, beads and gangling bracelets. Her cell-like room at the back of a health shop looked less like a clinic than a fairground booth where you might get your fortune told. Still, her manner was professional.

She strapped an electrode on to my left wrist, plugged the other end into what looked like a gas meter on the desk, opened a box containing 300 small glass phials and began. Inside each glass phial was the essential oil of a food substance which, via the electrode and the gas meter, registered a score between 1 and 10

on a small screen. One signified a void, 10 meant okay, five indicated caution. For the record, I must eschew milk, wheat, ketchup, chocolate, cloves, red meat and red wine. I should go easy on eel, pineapple and pickled onion and everything else I can pig out on including monosodium glutamates, soya cheese and quark, whatever that is. If I suddenly get the urge to eat rump steak, said Kadisha pocketing the £50 cheque I'd just given her for her services, the poison would be counter-balanced by a solution of honey, cider vinegar and molasses.

She then wrote a long list of recommended health foods to which I was not allergic. All of them, surprisingly, were available in the shop at the front. They included Mrs Lepper's gluten-free millet pasta, Mrs Krizible's fat-free Dutch fruit cake, a nasty-sounding soya ice-cream called Dream Kream which, said Kadisha smacking her lips, was absolutely delicious and, of

course, the famous cherry-flavoured chicken sternum cartilage to oil my joints.

Enough said. I bought everything on the list, including a home-made flapjack the size of a gym shoe. I ate it on Purley station waiting for the train. There was something curiously acrid about the taste and, come to think of it, the smell of that flapjack. Maybe it was a gym shoe. The man on the bench beside me looked at it hard, then got up and moved to the other end of the platform. In the end I gave up the struggle and dropped it in the nearest bin where it lay on top of the sweep wrappers, heavy, inert and malodorous like a dead ferret. I promise you, compared to the chicken sternum cartilage that flapjack was *fois gras* and strawberries. "If I were you, I'd stick to aspirin and cod liver oil for your arthritis," advised my doctor friend finishing his coffee. Maybe he's right - doctors sometimes are.

Can anyone keep peace between the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo?

SO MUCH for General Winter, and the stillness that for a few frozen months, at least, was supposed to lie across the tormented land of Kosovo. These days, however, when Christians fight Muslims across the snowy hillsides of the southern Balkans, not even Christmas can halt the bloodshed. British and German troops may once have respected a truce of sorts in the trenches of Flanders, but in 1998, when Serbs and ethnic Albanians are in the field, Christmas Eve is when ceasefires collapse. And not only ceasefires. Perhaps the most important casualty of this violent Christmas weekend is the old notion of how this dirty war might be ended.

Unnoticed until now, over the past few weeks, its contours have subtly shifted. Previously there was no argument about the villain of the piece. This was Slobodan Milosevic's war. He had started it back in 1989 (and with it the entire Balkan tragedy that would follow) by scrapping the autonomy Kosovo and its overwhelming Albanian majority had previously enjoyed, and even now, he retains the prime responsibility. His savage, utterly disproportionate crackdown on the ethnic Albanians last spring set the stage for a summer of fighting which would make refugees of a quarter of a million people, pit Russia against the West and ultimately have B-52s waiting, engines revving, on British airfields. Then came the October ceasefire agreement, providing for Serbian withdrawal, the start of political negotiations, and the despatch of 2,000 unarmed international observers to make sure everyone kept their word.

This time however, no matter how much you detest the regime in Belgrade, matters are not so simple. The Kosovo Liberation Army is at least as much to blame for the collapse of the ceasefire. To be sure, the Serbs are overreacting: is a column of tanks really required to avenge the death of a single policeman? But the KLA, too, is spoiling



RUPERT CORNWELL
One truth emerges from this violent Christmas: only a Western military presence can bring calm

for a fight. It has acquired new arms, above all anti-tank weapons to nullify the most potent asset of the Serb forces, and shows absolutely no interest in the political talks which are supposed to start next month. Bomb Milosevic, says the heart. But this time the head resists.

In truth, and despite every vow made by Western foreign ministers at meetings without number, Kosovo looks more like Bosnia with every passing day. The killing, admittedly, is nowhere near on the same scale. But even before half of them have even taken up their stations, the OSCE monitors are acquiring an uncanny resemblance to the unhappy men of Unprofor earlier in the decade, the Bosnian "peacekeepers" with no peace to keep. Yesterday, OSCE teams were sent to the village of Obranca, focal point of the latest fighting. How long, one wonders, before some of their number are taken hostage, or killed in the crossfire.

So what next? Conceivably, of course, this being the season of hope, good will, and irrational optimism, events might yet get us off the hook. Just maybe, after a decade of slaughter and barbarity, 1999 will prove to be the final year of this most terrible of the 20th century's Balkan wars. Maybe next year will at last see the demise of the Milosevic regime,

brought down peacefully from within by the economic misery and international obloquy it has inflicted upon the Serbian nation. Maybe its successor will be more sensible and less nationalist, open to a reasonable accommodation with the Kosovan Albanians. Maybe too, sweet reason will also descend on the shoulders of these latter, despite the atrocities and humiliations heaped upon them by Belgrade. And then again, 1999 may be when Saddam Hussein makes a state visit to Washington.

In practical terms, the West faces the dilemma of dealing with a conflict in which the middle ground of political negotiation, freely entered into by both parties, is now scorched earth. Plainly, we cannot let the two sides simply fight it out. In the short term, this would probably lead to another cycle of Serbian repression, horrific media pictures and public clamour forcing Western governments to intervene in much haste, but to little lasting effect.

But if crackdown is unacceptable, so too - at least for now - is an independent Kosovo, which the Western chancelleries argue might tear Macedonia apart. For even autocrats cannot ignore the bodybag factor. Before too long, the cost of enforcing control could prove too high even for the Serbs, and the Albanians who outnumber them nine to one in Kosovo would have their way. Thus the spectre of an inchoate "Greater Albania", which would further destabilise an already unstable region and perhaps drag Greece, Bulgaria and, worst of all, Turkey, into the fighting. In the long run, I have reluctantly come to believe, monolithic states of this kind are the only bricks with which to build the new Balkans. Right now, however, there is barely a smaller Albania, let alone a greater one.

But this violent Christmas has at least one merit: it has laid bare the harsh and central truth about Kosovo. Whatever is adjudged the best solution - whether to defy Balkan logic and attempt to main-



Ethnic Albanians flee from a Serbian attack near the town of Podujevo on Christmas Eve AP

tain an ethnically-mixed Kosovo somehow linked to Serbia, or to lay the ground for a new Albanian political entity in the southern Balkans - only a credible Western military presence will allow it to be put into practice. And we are not talking about unarmed observers, monitors or "verifiers", but ground troops with all the hardware they need, in Kosovo for the long haul.

Kosovo, in short, will have to become another Bosnia. Not, we must ensure, in the sense of the brutality and slaughter which preceded the settlement imposed by the Americans at Dayton, but in becoming a *de facto* Western protectorate as

Bosnia now is, installed under the guise of another Dayton. Ideally, of course, the instigators of this accord would be European statesmen, and the troops who make it stick should be European troops. But Kosovo has come too soon for Europe, whatever the agreement on a future European defence identity between Britain and France.

The prime mover will have to be Nato, in other words the Americans. The United States will not like it, no more than it liked the prospect of its ground troops committed to Bosnia - and perhaps even less, for in Bosnia a presence which was originally meant to last six months has

now become open-ended. For the US and its allies to meet some predetermined artificial deadline to withdraw, Washington knows full well, would simply invite disaster.

And so in Kosovo too. But a permanent military presence there would almost certainly prove as effective as it has in Bosnia, with remarkably little loss of life. It would guarantee the essentials: the Kosovo Albanians would be freed from the threat of Serbian oppression and violence; the Serbs would be assured of access to their holy sites, political and religious. Above all, it would buy time, to wait out Slobodan Milosevic.

THE INDEPENDENT New Clearway Inhaler



ONLY £9.95 INC P&P

We all know that one of the best treatments for symptoms of colds, catarrh, coughs and sinusitis is inhaling steam mixed with an aromatic substance. With this superb Inhaler you can treat yourself without bowls of boiling water, stinging eyes and soggy towels.

Simply pour in the hot water, add a few drops of aromatic oil (supplied), place your mouth and



nose over the hygienic mask and breathe deeply, letting the steam ease your symptoms. Portable and easy to use, not only is this unit safer to use but easier and more hygienic than traditional methods. This new Inhaler is available for just £9.95 inc p&p (saving you £1 on the RRP) and we have also included a free bottle of Eucalyptus Oil.

HOW TO ORDER (for UK residents only): Fill in the coupon giving your ACCESS VISA card number, or send with cheque or postal order. NO CASH. THE INDEPENDENT CLEARWAY INHALER OFFER. L&L HOUSE, LITTLEHEAD, CRANLEIGH, SURREY GU9 5TT. Or call the CREDIT CARD ORDER HOTLINE ON 01483 204498. ACCESS VISA welcome. Please quote ref: IND 981. Allow 28 days for delivery. Subject to availability. If you are not fully satisfied return within 7 days for a full refund.

Please send me: Clearway Inhaler £9.95 each inc p&p. I enclose a cheque/PO for £ (address on back) or I enclose my ACCESS VISA card number (L&L LTD IND 981 or debit my Access Visa account by the amount. My card number is:)

Expiry date: /

Signature: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Post Code: _____

Sent to THE INDEPENDENT CLEARWAY INHALER OFFER, L&L HOUSE, LITTLEHEAD, CRANLEIGH, SURREY GU9 5TT.

Please tick the box if you do not wish to receive other mailings from THE INDEPENDENT NEWS/PO BOX 1270 or from companies approved by THE INDEPENDENT NEWS/PO BOX 1270.

PANDORA

AFTER READING yesterday's newspapers, Pandora felt great sympathy for Peter Mandelson. Not because of the predictable barrage of personal criticism and snide satire from his enemies which Mandy can certainly cope with, but because of the devastating tributes from his friends. How painful for him to read Andrew Rawnsley's glowing but tragically out-of-synch account of Mandelson's political reputation's "most remarkable reconstruction" in *The Observer*, whose *Life* magazine had obviously gone to press before the loan story broke. Next was dear friend Robert Harris, the columnist and author, performing acts of Herculean hyperbole on his behalf: "To call what he [Mandelson] did 'sleaze'... is to murder the English language" and "sooner government by people like him than government by skinheads". Finally, Derek Draper's bilious attempt in the *Mail* on Sunday to make Mandy seem ordinary. "Here I am," he quotes Mandelson as saying, "supposedly the world's greatest political communicator and I'm saving up trips to the supermarket to make my life more interesting." Oh dear.

JOHN BIRT's visit to the Groucho Club a few nights

before Christmas caused a stir in the club originally founded as a writers' and publishers' hideout, now the favourite watering hole of television stars and independent producers, from Lenny Henry to Stephen Fry to Vic & Bob. The BBC boss was a guest of his administrative assistant Katie Kay, a Groucho member, who settled him into a quiet corner table in the upstairs bar. "It seems very reasonable," the notoriously cost-conscious Birt told Kay later as she paid their bill. When this overheard remark was circulated later, a number of members' eyebrows were raised. The Groucho's cocktails are excellent, but nobody before ever called them inexpensive.

AFTER BOWING to Tony Blair and Sir Edward Heath's appeals to allow the Branson balloon flight to proceed over its territory, China

announced sternly on Christmas Eve that it would ban any more round-the-world balloons from crossing its borders. This is bad news for Branson, and the competing Cable and Wireless, Breitling Orbiter 3 and Spirit of Peace balloon teams, since virtually all northern hemisphere global balloon routes must cross over China. However, Pandora hears that at least three other teams are planning a southern hemisphere circumnavigation for next summer in the race to be the first to blow around the globe.



THE PANDORA Prize for the most surprisingly witty Christmas card goes to the National Audit Office. Printed to appear like a genuine NOA report on the "Ministry of Merriment", the card documents the "cost over-runs,

delays and irregularities in the production of Christmas presents". An accompanying "press release" reports: "Asked to account for 500,000 X-rated imported videos, Santa said, 'I know it looks bad, but at least I did obtain three quotes before purchase, as previously recommended by the NAO'."

THE MOST eagerly-awaited Western film for years is about to open in America - a film that was originally the brainchild of the late Sam Peckinpah - and its unlikely director is Englishman Stephen Frears (pictured). Over the past weekend, a storm of publicity has appeared about *The Hi-Lo Country*, a tale of two old-fashioned cowboys in modern New Mexico, and Frears, the north London resident whose credits include *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Prick Up Your Ears*, *Dangerous Liaisons* and *The Grifters*. Frears told *The New York Times*: "I had to literally learn everything... Western films are sort of half mythology, half what it was like in the West." He toured New Mexico for weeks before shooting began and, on the set, confesses to often thinking of Clint Eastwood. "What would Clint do now?" he asked his assistant.

Sir Francis McLean

A FEW days after the American 12th Army Group liberated Luxembourg in September 1944 Francis McLean, the 40-year-old Chief Engineer of the Psychological Warfare Division of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (P.W.D. Shae), went there from Paris to make sure that the Allies would be able to use Radio Luxembourg's powerful transmitter for psychological warfare against the German army, still only a few miles away. McLean found that the studios in the centre of the city were in full working order. But, before retreating, the Germans had taken care to immobilise the station by firing pistol shots through all the valves of the 120-kilowatt transmitter at Junglinster, some 12 miles outside the capital.

Fortunately an unsung Luxembourgish hero, W. Scholtes, the chief engineer at Junglinster, happened to know that a complete set of reserve valves was held at a nearby post office. McLean soon had Radio Luxembourg ready for service again on its wavelength of 1295m.

A mixed military and civilian team of amateur American psychological warriors attached to 12th Army Group were the first programme men on the scene. They belonged to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the CIA. An experienced Anglo-American group was sent to Luxembourg to broadcast on behalf of P.W.D. Shae - shortly afterwards augmented by a strong contingent from the BBC's European Service.

The OSS men took the line that they had saved the station and they resented being overshadowed by professional broadcasters who had not. Moreover they wanted to start a purely American enterprise, which they called "Operation Annie", using the transmitter for "black" propaganda purporting to come from dissidents within Germany. The P.W.D. Shae people, especially the British, considered that this scheme would endanger the credibility of the Allies' open or "white" broadcasts.

One of the OSS commanders asked McLean whether it would be possible to use the Junglinster transmitter on a different wavelength during the night after Radio Luxembourg had closed down. By when could they know whether it was technically feasible and how long would it take to alter the wavelength each time?

Within three days McLean provided the answers. It could be done

and the wavelength change would only take 20 minutes. So "Operation Annie" went into action. At midnight an oboe signature tune introduced a strong new station calling itself Radio Twelve Twelve (the changed wavelength) to broadcast until 5.30am. It ran until the end of hostilities. McLean's solution pleased the OSS men and relieved the P.W.D. Shae contingent at Luxembourg - which I was shortly to join - of the pressure to carry "black" transmissions alongside straightforward ones. McLean himself had the satisfaction of knowing that he had done in three days what would take BBC engineers by normal procedures many weeks to achieve. Whether Radio Twelve Twelve deceived the German authorities or shortened the war by a single minute is another matter.

McLean, who was an accomplished linguist, brought to his Shae task substantial experience of collaboration with European engineers. After graduating from Birmingham University he joined Western Electric and worked for three years on the design of high-power radio transmitters before being transferred to I.T.T.'s Research Laboratories in Paris. From 1928 to 1932 he was involved in designing high-power equipment for both broadcasting and telephone transmission in Italy, Switzerland, France, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In 1930 he married Dorothy Blackstaffe. They had known each other since their early teens.

On their return to England McLean's design work was particularly concerned with the BBC's short- and medium-wave transmitter equipment and in 1937 he joined the corporation's Station Design and Installation Department as head of the radio section. He was temporarily sent in 1938-39 to the Cavendish and Liverpool laboratories to help on problems connected with the atom-splitter cyclotron. From 1939 to 1943 he was deeply involved in the BBC's wartime expansion of short-wave transmissions and monitoring stations.

He also designed transmitters for the War Reporting Unit, and in 1943 was seconded to the Psychological Warfare Division of Shae as Chief Engineer. In the planning of "Operation Annie" he made preparations for mobile transmitters as well as for recommissioning European radio stations. In August 1944 he was the first BBC man to enter Paris after its liberation, even ahead of the war correspondents. He reactivated



McLean, left, in 1944, demonstrating his separation of wavelengths between Radio Luxembourg and the 'black' Radio Twelve Twelve. With him are, standing from left, Leonard Miall, Lt-Col S.R. Rosenblum, Lindley Fraser (later Head of the BBC German Service), Ralph Poston (later Director of Broadcasting, Palestine), Noel Newsome (BBC Director of European Broadcasts) and Etienne Anyot (later BBC Third Programme planner); and, sitting, Patrick Gordon Walker (later Foreign Secretary) and Robin Gordon Walker

ed various French transmitters before moving on to Luxembourg. Later in the war he recommissioned transmitters in Leipzig, Hamburg and other captured German cities, putting to good use the information on the location of spare valves he had gathered at Junglinster.

After the war McLean's career was a steady climb up the ladder of the BBC engineering directorate to the very top. Though necessarily interested in programmes his chief concern and fascination was always in technical developments. He retained his international connections, journeying in 1946 to Singapore to plan the BBC's Far East Relay Station, and later to the Indian subcontinent as an adviser to Radio Pakistan. From 1952 he led the BBC delegations to many international

conferences on channel allocation, frequency modulation (FM), stereo and, above all, colour television.

As early as 1953, McLean read a paper to the British Association on "The Application of Colour to Television Broadcasting". In 1956 he delivered a Faraday Lecture on the same subject to large audiences in 23 cities in the United Kingdom and to one in Brussels, where he spoke in French. The same year he was invited to give the Granada lecture at Guildhall on telecommunications in the next 10 years. This ITV gesture represented the first thaw in the cold war between the BBC and its commercial competitor.

McLean recognised that the principal technical problems of television at that time were to define and achieve good colour, to plan the new

625-line UHF network (first used in 1964 for BBC2) so as to permit the eventual closure of the original 405-line VHF network, and to make possible the unattended operation of transmitters and studio equipment. He played a leading role in solving all of them.

By the time McLean became Director of Engineering in 1963 the introduction of colour television was high on the broadcasting agenda. One difficulty was the absence of an internationally agreed system. The Americans had established NTSC - the initials of the National Television Systems Committee, though cynics said the letters could equally stand for Never Twice the Same Colour. The French came along with SECAM, a different system of colour transmission which, like NTSC, was re-

ceivable on black-and-white sets, but claimed certain advantages over it. The rival merits of NTSC and SECAM were argued at many international forums, with McLean firmly on the side of NTSC. Then the Germans developed PAL, basically NTSC but with certain additional features. This was the system much of Western Europe eventually adopted.

The world's colour television was then split three ways, with Canada, the United States and much of Latin America, plus Japan, committed to NTSC; half of Europe, including Britain and Germany, and much of the Commonwealth committed to PAL; and France, the Communist bloc and some others committed to SECAM, threatening to make the ready international exchange of programmes impossible. Fortu-

nately such a fate was avoided by the timely BBC invention of the electronic standards converter.

Sir Francis McLean (he was knighted in 1967) described this sophisticated equipment as "the result of both inspiration and hard work - the secret of engineering development". It converted systems as well as standards, and was thus able in 1968 to provide European television with an Olympic Games service of PAL or SECAM colour pictures on the 625-line 50-field standard which originated in Mexico from NTSC cameras working on the 525-line 60-field standard. The absence of internationally agreed system and standards had ceased to matter.

McLean gave the greatest encouragement to design development and research. He had a first-class brain and probably made a greater contribution to the BBC than any previous Director of Engineering. He was a stern but fair boss who disliked privilege and grumbled when he was accorded VIP treatment.

After his retirement from the BBC in 1968 he became the technical director of a company set up by ICI and CBS to develop a system of television recording and in 1972 he chaired a Royal Commission on FM Broadcasting in Australia. His report was accepted and implemented by the Australian government. From 1961 to 1972 he was Chairman of the BSI Telecommunications Standards Committee.

McLean's retirement also changed his life style. He and his wife moved to Newbury. Alongside his professional work he spent 10 years raising sheep on a small farm. He became the President of the Newbury District Field Club, a century-old society concerned with local history and the like. In 1978 they moved to nearby Woolton Hill, where McLean in his eighties produced very acceptable white wine from his garden, while still taking a lively interest in the latest developments in broadcasting and telecommunications.

LEONARD MIALL

Francis Charles McLean, broadcasting engineer, born 6 November 1904, Chief Engineer, Psychological Warfare Division, Shae 1943-45; MBE 1945, CBE 1953; Deputy Chief Engineer, BBC 1952-60, Deputy Director of Engineering 1960-63, Director of Engineering 1963-68; KT 1967; married 1930 Dorothy Blackstaffe (one son, one daughter); died 19 December 1998.

Mel Fisher



'Finders, keepers'

MEL FISHER was an opportunist who embodied the dictum "Finders, keepers". Initially equipped only with flippers and goggles, the one-time chicken farmer recovered hundreds of thousands of gold and silver coins, jewellery and ingots from Spanish shipwrecks in the waters off Florida.

For years he doggedly hunted the cargo of a single treasure-packed galleon, the *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, which sank in 1622 near the Florida Keys. When he and his son Kane found the wreck in 1985, they recovered treasure worth \$400m and as a result Fisher, his family

and his long-suffering investors became millionaires.

In the murky world of treasure hunters, Fisher was a hero, a fixture of Key West who could often be found - wearing a trademark gold doubloon around his neck - in dockside bars, talking long into the night about his undersea adventures. When asked why he had chosen this risky and uncertain trade, he said, "For the fun, the romance and the adventure." While he searched for treasure he liked to repeat hopefully, "Today is the day."

But Fisher's success in discovering treasure in an era when salvage

was based on British admiralty law, which held salvagers' work to be in the public interest, did not endear him to environmentalists, historians and archaeologists.

Their efforts to persuade US authorities to control the salvage trade eventually produced the 1987 Abandoned Shipwreck Act, which put an end to admiralty law and conveyed the rights to wrecks discovered within three miles of the coastline to the states.

Fisher spent much of his time and money in court, fending off efforts to "take his treasure", as he put it, but the new laws made his business untenable and, by June 1998, of thou-

sands of known wrecks, fewer than 20 were under salvage permit. About half of those were Fisher's.

Mel Fisher was born in 1922, hundreds of miles from the sea, in Gary, Indiana, and was trained as a hydraulic engineer at Alabama University. However, he turned his attention to poultry farming in California, and then went on to open a skindiving shop in Redondo Beach. He began diving for bounty, and, on discovering there was little to be had off the California coast, moved his family to Florida and became a serious treasure hunter. "What Mel lived on was that

American dream and being able to actually fulfil it. He let nothing stand in his way," said Pat Clynne, Fisher's spokesman at the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society Museum in Key West. However, his lust for adventure came at a price. In 1975, his son Dirk drowned hunting treasure inside a ship just days after discovering the first signs of the *Atocha* wreck. It took the Fisher clan another decade to find the "mother lode" of gold and silver in the *Atocha* cargo that would be their greatest find.

Fisher never strayed far from controversy. Last month he admitted selling counterfeit gold coins at his

gift shop in Key West, and agreed to repay to purchasers the prices of the coins - from \$2,500 to \$10,000 - which had been sold on the understanding that they were from a 1733 Spanish fleet that went aground off the Keys. In a negotiated plea, Fisher pledged that his company would sell only coins recovered from shipwrecks to which it had salvage rights.

EDWARD HELMORE

Mel Fisher, treasure hunter, born Gary, Indiana 1922; married (three sons, one daughter, and one son deceased); died Key West, Florida 19 December 1998.

GAZETTE

BIRTHDAYS

King Birendra of Nepal, 53; Mr Intikhab Alam, cricketer, 57; Mr Terry Butcher, footballer, 40; Sir Ellis Clarke, former President, Trinidad and Tobago, 81; Major Madeleine Craggs, Registrar, General Osteopathic Council, 53; Mr Thomas Gould VC, 84; Mr Max Hastings, Editor, *The Evening Standard*, 53; Lord Hattersley, former government minister, 66; Mr Noel Johnson, actor, 82; Mr Nigel Kennedy, violinist, 42; Mrs Frances Morrell, former leader, 114; Sir Patrick O'Connor, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 84; Mrs Bridget Prentice MP, 46; Mr Simon Raven, writer, 71; Mrs Joan Ruddock MP, 55; Dame Maggie Smith, actress, 64; The Right Rev William Westwood, former Bishop of Peterborough, 73.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Sir Archibald Geikie, geologist, 1835; Thomas Woodrow Wilson, 28th US

President, 1856; Philip Wilson Steer, artist, 1860; Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington, astronomer, 1882; St John Greer Ervine, playwright and critic, 1883; Roger Huntington Sessions, composer, 1896. Deaths: St Francis de Sales, 1622; Queen Mary II (of William and Mary), 1694; Rob Roy (Robert Macgregor), clan chief, 1734; Thomas Babington Macaulay, first Baron Macaulay, author and statesman, 1859; Thomas Creswick, painter, 1869; George Robert Gissing, novelist, 1903; Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, engineer, 1923; Maurice Joseph Ravel, composer, 1937; Theodore Herman Albert Dreiser, novelist, 1945; Victor Emmanuel III, former King of Italy, 1947; Jack Lovelock, athlete and surgeon, killed 1949; Paul Hindemith, composer, 1963; Max (Maximilian) Raoul Steiner, film music composer, 1971; Sam Peckinpah, film director, 1984. On this day: Westminster Abbey was dedicated, 1065; in the United States, the first patent for chewing gum was issued, 1869; the centre portion of

the Tay Bridge in Scotland collapsed, taking with it a train, including 75 passengers and crew, 1879; Messina, Sicily, was almost completely destroyed by an earthquake when over 150,000 lives were lost, 1908; the Irish Free State became the Republic of Ireland, 1937. Today is the Feast Day of St Antony of Lerins, The Holy Innocents (Childermas) and St Theodore the Sanctified.

LECTURES

Victoria and Albert Museum: Imogen Stewart, "The Christmas Story in English Medieval Embroidery", 2pm.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh Guards.

Whose Christmas is it anyway?

MEANINGS OF CHRISTMAS

PAUL HANDLEY

At last, it seems the Church may be catching up with what ordinary people have always known about the way to celebrate the birth of Christ

JUST AS with government ministers, if you want to insult a bishop, you call him "trendy". Many in the church leadership, and those in the Vatican in particular, remain suspicious of new ideas, but many clergymen - in their desire to stay (as they say) "alongside" people and in their drive to keep numbers up - are keen judges of new shifts in popular culture and aspiration. They try to keep abreast of the latest consumer unendurables and the soaps' plot-lines, like diligent parents welcoming their daughter's new boyfriend into the house, partly because they love her and partly because they're afraid she'll flounce off if they don't.

Now they are doing the same thing for Christmas. After years of whingeing, the Church is beginning to look at Christmas like everybody else. First, a couple of recent examples: Sunday trading and the National Lottery. In both cases, a significant proportion of the Church fought hard against these developments; in both cases, the moral arguments seemed, at first, to be all on the Church's side: it was bad for people to gamble, it was bad for them to have no let-up from commercial pressures. But, in both cases, the Church lost. The absolute morality hadn't changed (gambling and a seven-day working week are still bad), and there were those who thought the Church ought simply to stick to its principles whatever the cost in terms of unpopularity, marginalisation and ridicule. But to argue thus was to misunderstand the Church's motivation for opposing change in the first place.

Basil Hume, George Carey, the Methodist President, the Scottish Moderator and all that lot are genuinely concerned for the well-being of the whole of the British people, for whom they feel a degree of responsibility. Like diligent parents, they act whenever they see something approaching that might harm their people. The thing is, in this country, at least, church leaders have very little power. This is a vital point to grasp: one wants to understand the dynamics of spiritual politics: the desire to protect is coupled with the lack of the means to do so.

Thus, when people opt for a potentially harmful innovation, the leaders of the mainstream churches first try to argue it away. If they fail, they can't go off in a sulk - reassuring themselves that, well, at least they and their small band of followers are going to remain pure. If they want to stick with

the majority, they have to work with the choices that majority makes. This is an uncomfortable position to be in; but what was essence of the Incarnation if it wasn't God making the best of a bad job? And just imagine the alternative: a priesthood with political power. In the theocracy that would emerge, the object to be protected would cease to be the people, and become instead the beliefs in which the priesthood's power resides. Remember the Inquisition? Not for nothing was God incarnated as a helpless baby.

And so to Christmas. What is happening here is that the democratising process is being applied to the stuff of Christianity itself, and, once again, the Church is powerless to stop it. In the past, the divines had worked out a proper shape for Christmas: a preparatory period of abstinence and reflection on the four last things, death, judgement, heaven and hell - just to get people in the right mood for the festivities, the right mood being one of sober joy, awe, humility and prayerfulness. The post-Christmas period was interspersed with commemorations that reinforced the message: the feast of the holy innocents and the stoning of the first martyr. When the priesthood was powerful enough to set the trend, this was thought an appropriate response to the glorious mystery of the incarnation.

Too earnest for us, though, and so the whole business has been turned on its head. The celebrations and festivities start long before Christmas Day, and the period for sober reflection, if there has to be one, has

attached itself to the doldrums between Christmas and New Year (though not, as yet, to New Year's Eve itself).

And what's this? Christian professionals are starting to appear more relaxed. Once again, the movement began with the parish clergy, for whom December is now booked out with carol services and Christingles, and has extended up the hierarchy. To judge how far it has gone one has to look for signs of omission: it will be some time yet before you hear sermons in praise of unbridled commercialism, but the time may come. The Archbishop of York may have begun the process by contrasting, in a newspaper sermonette, the humility of the first nativity with the glitz of Christmas consumerism but with... the Millennium Dome - the kind of move which is known in PR circles as a "swerve". And instead of dwelling on the things lost - patience, anticipation, reflection - our church leaders praise elements of the "new" Christmas: the extension of generosity, hospitality, charity, family responsibility and overall cheerfulness.

Yes, this is a sign of the Church's weakness, and its inability to order even its own business; but thank goodness for it. What it really means is that, perforce, our spiritual guardians are having to acknowledge the innate moral robustness and good sense of the ordinary people. It was to these people, after all, that Jesus first appeared.

Paul Handley is Editor of the "Church Times"

My last junk food binge drove me to crispbread

I DECIDED to clean out the fridge the other day. We don't usually clean out our fridge. We just box it up every four or five years and send it off to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta with a note to help themselves to anything that looks scientifically promising. But we hadn't seen one of the cats for a few days and I had a vague recollection of having glimpsed something furry on the bottom shelf towards the back - turned out to be a large piece of Gorgonzola.

So there I was, down on my knees unwrapping pieces of foil and peering cautiously into Tupperware containers, when I came across an interesting product called a breakfast pizza. I examined it with a kind of rueful fondness, as you might regard an old photograph of yourself dressed in clothes that you cannot believe you ever thought were stylish. The breakfast pizza, you see, represented the last surviving relic of a bout of very serious retail foolishness on my part.

Some weeks ago I announced to my wife that I was going to the

supermarket with her next time she went because the stuff she kept bringing home was - how can I put this? - not fully in the spirit of American eating. Here we were living in a paradise of junk food - the country that gave the world cheese in a spray can - and she kept bringing home healthy stuff like fresh broccoli and packets of Ryvita.

It was because she was English, of course. She didn't really understand the rich, unrivalled possibilities for greasiness and goo that the American diet offers. I longed for artificial bacon bits, melted cheese in a shade of yellow unknown to nature, and creamy chocolate fillings, sometimes all in the same product. I wanted food that squirts when you bite into it or plops onto your shirt front in such gross quantities that you have to rise carefully from the table and limbo over to the sink to clean yourself up.

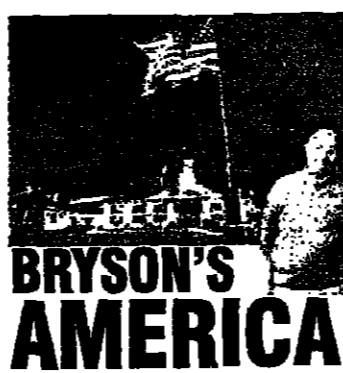
So I accompanied her to the supermarket and while she was off squeezing melons and pricing shitake (Japanese oak log) mushrooms, I made for the junk

food section - which was essentially all the rest of the store. Well, it was heaven.

The breakfast cereals alone could have occupied me for most of the afternoon. There must have been 200 types, and I am not exaggerating. Every possible substance that could be dried, puffed and sugar coated was there. The most immediately arresting was Cookie Crisp, which tried to pretend it was a nutritious breakfast but was really just chocolate chip cookies that you put in a bowl and ate with milk. Brilliant!

Also of note were cereals called Peanut Butter Crunch, Cinnamon Mini Buns, Count Chocula ("with Monster Marshmallows"), and a particularly hardcore offering called Cookie Blast Oat Meal, which contained four kinds of cookies. I grabbed one of each of the cereals and two of the oatmeal - how often I've said that you shouldn't start a day without a big steaming bowl of cookies - and sprinted with them back to the trolley.

"What's that?" my wife asked



in the special tone of voice with which she often addresses me in retail establishments.

I didn't have time to explain. "Breakfast for the next six months," I panted as I dashed past. "And don't even think about putting any of it back and getting muesli."

I had no idea how the market for junk food had proliferated. Everywhere I turned I was confronted with foods guaranteed to make you waddle, most of which were entirely new to me - jelly creme pies, moon pies, pecan spinwheels, peach mellos,

root beer buttons, chocolate fudge devil dogs and a whipped marshmallow sandwich spread called Fluff, which came in a tub large enough to bath a baby in.

You really cannot believe the bounteous variety of non-nutritious foods available to the American supermarket shopper these days, or the quantities in which they are consumed. I recently read that the average American eats 17.8lbs of pretzels every year.

Aisle seven ("Food for the Seriously Obese") was especially productive. It had a whole section devoted exclusively to a product called Toaster Pastries, which included, among much else, eight different types of toaster strudel. And what exactly is toaster strudel? It was coated in sugar and looked drippy. I grabbed an armload.

I admit I got a little carried away - but there was so much, and I had been away so long. It was the breakfast pizza that finally made my wife snap. She looked at the box and said: "No!" "I beg your pardon, my sweet?" "You are not bringing home

something called breakfast pizza. I will let you have" - she reached into the trolley for some specimen samples - "root beer buttons and toaster strudel and..." She lifted out a packet that she hadn't noticed before. "What's this?"

I looked over her shoulder. "Microwave pancakes," I said. "Microwave pancakes!" she repeated, but with less enthusiasm.

"Isn't science wonderful?" "You're going to eat it all," she went on. "Every bit of everything that you don't put back on the shelves now. You do understand that, don't you?"

"Of course," I said in my sincerest voice.

And you know she actually made me eat it. I spent weeks working my way through a symphony of American junk food, and it was all awful. Every bit of it. I don't know whether American junk food has got worse, or whether my taste buds have matured, but even the treats I'd grown up with now seemed discouragingly pallid or disgustingly sickly.

The most awful of all was the breakfast pizza. I tried it three or four times, baked it in the oven, zapped it with microwaves, and once in desperation, served it with a side of marshmallow Fluff, but it never rose beyond a kind of limp, chewy listlessness. Eventually I gave up altogether and hid the box in the Tupperware graveyard on the bottom shelf of the fridge.

Which is why, when I came across it again the other day, I regarded it with mixed feelings. I started to chuck it out, then hesitated and opened the lid. It didn't smell bad - I expect it was pumped so full of chemicals that there wasn't any room for bacteria - and I thought about keeping it a while longer as a reminder of my folly, but in the end I discarded it. And then, feeling peckish, I went off to the larder to see if I couldn't find a nice plain piece of Ryvita and maybe a stick of celery.

Extracted from *Notes from a Big Country*, Doubleday, £16.99. From all major book shops or by mail order from 01624 675137.

A very independent traveller

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Last year, when most 16-year-olds were quarrelling with their parents about staying out at night, Hannah Chapman was travelling Europe, alone, armed only with a round-Europe rail ticket, a BT card and nearly £200. She's now back in London, working for her A-levels. Her mother Sarah and step-father Bill paid for the ticket, but the bigger gift was their trust.



Sarah with her daughter, Hannah: 'I wasn't afraid for her - not ever'

Philip Meech

Sarah

She felt so limited by school, by us, by her little north London world. She was so angry that there were times when, frankly, the thought of Hannah going away seemed wonderful. When she said, almost as a threat, that she wanted to travel, we said: "Yes, just do it." Before I bought the ticket I had to come to terms with the fact that she would be alone, that dreadful things could happen to her, but that you have to take a leap of faith. After all, something dreadful could happen to her in north London - why is it more likely in Europe?

I wasn't afraid for her - not ever. Hannah has always been able to look after herself. When her father and I broke up I think she decided: "No one is ever going to hurt me." She has the strongest sense of self-preservation of anyone that age I know. It would be a brave person who would mess with her. On her fourth birthday she was given a dress. She wore it once and said she would never wear a dress again. She was determined that there was nothing a boy could do that she couldn't do. When she learned to play football she did it well enough to be the first girl, ever, to play for the FA. People ask if I didn't think twice about letting a 16-year-old travel alone across Europe. I say: "Not any 16-year-old, just this one."

Both Bill (her stepfather) and I had travelled alone, which is why we encouraged her to do it. Part of the pleasure is the opportunity to be selfish, to go where you want, when you want. I knew she would meet people with ease and she is used to travelling without plans. On family holidays we never book hotels in advance. We just go.

We had no idea where she was going but she telephoned frequently

and you could tell by her voice that she was excited and engaged and very much alive.

There was one long gap of about eight days. That was the only time I worried. I gave myself a time limit. If she hadn't rung, I suppose I would have had to go to Prague, which is the last place she phoned from, and try to trace her. But then she phoned and on impulse we thought it would be nice to meet her in Calais. When we got there we discovered that she had been arrested in Berlin and missed the train. She was on her way to Amsterdam. So we drove there. Hannah just wandered up and said "hello" as though it was as normal as could be that we should be there to meet her.

I don't know how much she has told me about her journey and I don't know if I want to know. She has survived. That is enough.

Hannah

We didn't discuss it and I didn't plan it. I left thinking: "Everything is unknown, I'll just see what happens next." After three days in Amsterdam with friends I headed for Switzerland, arriving at the border about 9.30pm. It looked like a big town but everything was closed so I went back to the station.

I was walking past this zoo and I could see the light reflecting off the animals' eyes. There was no sound and I could feel the hairs rise on the back of my neck. I thought: "God, I'm by myself." So I phoned home and then took a train which stopped in Basle at 3am where I sat on a bench for the rest of the night chatting with this guy. That was my first night alone. It was a bit overwhelming.

I wanted to pack in as much as I could, so sometimes I went without

sleep for three days, then I would sleep on the train or in a park. It was strange. You are there by yourself. Nowhere to stay, no one you know, you don't know the place, everything is down to you: good or bad. You are in complete control. There was an overpowering sense of freedom. I loved it. I had no responsibility to be anyone but myself.

There were times when I felt intimidated. Like when I was with some Albanians in a park and a man came over and said to me, in English: "I think you should get out of here. Don't follow me, but leave as soon as you can." Or when I got flashed on the train, or at 3am in Milan when I had to walk to the station past prostitutes sitting on the tops of cars, or when I got arrested in Berlin.

But I went into things with an open, positive attitude. I expected to get the same back and I did. I think being young was a protection in a way. People wanted to show me everything, they cooked me meals, they took me out. And the relationships you make are so intimate. You become best friends for a night - the best nights of your life - and then you move on.

You have to keep your eyes open but you can tell in the first 10 minutes if someone is seriously dodgy. The choices you make affect you so you have to be strong with yourself and if things get dodgy, run! As long as you are confident, and able to communicate, you're made.

When I arrived back in Amsterdam I dumped my bag, went to a café and rang home. When I heard they were waiting for me, I gave my joint to someone and hopped and skipped to the station. Man, I had the roughest time I've ever had - it was fantastic. I am so grateful to my parents. I'm so glad that they said "just go".

Poems, broken glass lay the ghost of pain

AMBER... THAT's not her real name. It's the name my daughter chose when we were both interviewed by a national paper. The subject was the poetry I wrote about her teenage years of illness, a sort of love affair with dying in the form of anorexia.

It had seemed natural to write them at the time - not poems, but jottings in a private notebook, small splinters of anger and pain. I'm a writer; writing is the way I trust myself to think best. As she pulled out of that first crisis I read through the notes and saw they could be poems. Maybe that way it would make sense. We'd sat in waiting rooms with other families in the same confusion, and tried to talk about the weather. Put an adolescent's problem in a family and everyone starts asking who to blame. Parents look at themselves - and each other - and the question is there. I couldn't speak for other families, but maybe putting it in print, one father's view, would help others speak out in their way.

I checked the poems with my daughter. Yes, she said, go ahead: that's an accurate record, disturbing but true. When I've read them in public, there has always been someone who comes up afterwards. Often it's not anorexia that has touched their family, but some other problem or addiction. What they recognise is the moment when you look into the eyes of the child you

While his daughter went through the suicidal hell of disordered eating, Philip Gross made jottings that were to become poems

thought you knew better than anyone else in the world, and something else looks out. I think of the siege scenario: the hostage appears at a window, mouthing words that don't sound like their own, in a flat voice, and you have to guess there's someone just behind them with a gun. You can call in the marksmen, you can argue, rage or cry, and the child might suffer, but the illness, the obsession or addiction, will look back at you with no feeling in its eyes.

So there she was: Amber, for her own protection. It was her life and people had questions to ask, quite rightly: what I was doing with it? I couldn't speak for her. Did she want to speak for herself? Yes, cautiously, she did. She had a new life now, as a student in another city. Could we do it without having her face or name exposed? In one photograph she appeared with back to camera, at a window.

How had we got here? As a poet, you expect to be answerable to a handful of people committed to reading slowly, more than once, weighing each word for what's in it. Then I had a phone call saying that my

book, *The Wasting Game*, had been short-listed for the Whitbread Prize, and there were people from the press and the radio asking for interviews.

It was the anorexia poems that they wanted to talk about. The book contains other things, four years of a life with a first visit to my father's birthplace, Estonia, and the delicate negotiations of a love affair. I wanted the book to be judged on all of it - evidence that poetry isn't just a word game, that it can help us live our lives, that it's some use. But the title sequence was the part, I knew, that might be news.

Later, reading our words in print and hearing ourselves on the radio was like looking into a mirror. Yes, that's us, but... We had been sensitively handled. It wasn't a distorting mirror - not like the mirrors which menace an anorexic's life, showing her something horrible and bloated. (Never, never think that it's to do with vanity.) Nor was it the equally distorted mirror of the advert and the TV screen which tells girls what they should look like. No, it was us, but even an accurate reflection

is something slightly other. Thankfully.

So she became Amber. Like a good novel, we could be true but not utterly factual. Because there's no such girl as Amber, I can confess a small crime that says something for our family: something not in the book. Years on, we were driving on the motorway and we glimpsed the tower of the hospital where she spent some dreadful time. One day, she said, I should go back. We looked at each other. Why not now?

At the gate was barbed wire; inside a demolition site. We trespassed into empty wards where every weekend visit had been news of someone's running away or suicide attempt or self-harm. It all came back: the awful unyieldingness of it. I had never known that something could be terrifying, and yet tedious at the same time.

Faced with those devious, stubborn and deadly obsessions, day in, day out, the system and the staff had to become as dodged as the illness itself. We had to try to imagine that our daughter's free spirit still existed and was not quite crushed. It did, but it was hard to trust it then.



Philip Gross Christopher Jones

The poems in the book hardly touch this. For one thing, we had to be grateful to the system that medically saved our daughter's life. But standing in that gutted ward she and I looked at each other and realised that each of us wanted to shout, to scream. We did. There was the therapy room where our

family had been diagnosed from behind the two-way mirror; and there was a leap in my heart when I saw what someone had already done. The mirror, thick plate glass, was cracked from side to side.

It makes little difference that we broke two more panes. It was an exorcism, not as precise as a poem, maybe, but... What stopped my breath was when my daughter took a felt pen and signed her piece of damage, with her own name. Not 'Amber', though that's the one we'll use, for this:

'I'm fat, look fat.'
Yes and the moon's made of cheese,
that chunk she won't touch in the fridge
dried, craved, sweating in its cold
like someone with a killing fever.
Half a scrape of Marmite sandwich,
last night's pushed-aside
potatoes greying like a tramp's teeth,
crusts, crumbs are a danger to her,
so much orbiting space junk
that's weightless for only so long.
Burn it up on re-entry, burn it,
burn it. So she trains
with weights, she jogs, she runs
as if the sky were falling.
The Wasting Game by Philip Gross.
Bloodaxe Books, £6.95.

Triumphs amid the disasters

THE YEAR IN TELEVISION

GERARD GILBERT

They were triumphant
Delia Smith, Carol Smillie, Jeremy Clarkson, Caroline Ahearne, Dame Thora Hird.

They were not
Chris Evans, Professor Robert Winston, Ainsley Harriott, Pauline Quirke...

Pauline Quirke?
The *Birds of a Feather* sitcom actress, boosted no doubt by critical raves for her role in *The Sculptress*, tried "doing a David Jason" and crossing over into a BBC1 police drama, *Maisie Raine*.

Not good?
Not unless you like people who go round shouting all the time.

Other dramas that disappointed
Marks and Gran's too-linear life of Oswald Mosley, as well as Frank Deasy's look at the explosion of hard drugs in 1980s Edinburgh, *Looking after Jo Jo*, which marked the return to the small screen of John MacKenzie, the director of *The Long Good Friday*. The similarities with that 1979 Bob Hoskins movie were a little too marked perhaps, and this was also over-familiar terrain for Robert Carlyle. *Vanity Fair* was more interesting, capturing Thackeray's satirical tone with fantastic design work and brave casting. You didn't hear people talking about it at work the next day, though.

The best dramas
The other big costume drama of the year, *Our Mutual Friend*, was another well-designed film, which managed to rise above the clichéd use of natural light (the impression of dust-laden everything was particularly well conveyed). After Christine

Edzard's *Little Dorrit*, this was the most convincing portrayal yet of Dickens's world. Anna Friel looked very pretty in a corseted dress, but not as lovely as Aisling O'Sullivan in the year's best all-round cosie drama, *The American*. Michael Hastings's adaptation of the Henry James novel, starring O'Sullivan, Diana Rigg and Matthew Modine, transcended its style to involve the viewer with the lives of its characters. As did Adrian Hodge's adaptation of John McGahern's *Amongst Women*, with a great performance from Tony Doyle as the strict Irish widower. The bravest of Alan Bennett's new round of *Talking Heads 2* involved David Haig as a paedophile. The best had Dame Thora Hird as a nonagenarian war widow recalling her dead husband.

Not so modern horrors
Two big-budget dramas tried to make us take seriously an alien invasion (*Invasion: Earth*) and vampires (*Ultraviolet*). The latter was Jed Mercurio's sophomore project after writing for *This Life*. *Brothers and Sisters*, about the lives of a gospel choir community in the north of England, was every bit as good as *This Life*, but I don't recall one word of criticism spoken for or against it in any television review. Perhaps it only pays to reflect the lives of metropolitan media types.

Who needs dramas when you've got real people?
The flood of docu-soaps came, as was expected. *The Cruise*, *Superstore*, *Pleasure Beach*, *Airline*, *Clampers*, *Zoo Keepers* and *Health Farm* were just some of the better of them. Heck, someone even made one about *The Independent* - a

salutary lesson to us Canary Wharfers on the distorting power of the docu-soap genre.

Programmes from Hell
Nannies, Christmases, neighbours, weddings, builders and divorces were all from hell. Andy Hamilton entitled his *Huw Wheldon Memorial Lecture* on the pitfalls of "real people" television, "Brain Surgeons from Hell".

Is it funny?
One of the greatest reasons to be cheerful about television in 1998 was that the British sitcom showed some signs of emerging from the purgatory of attempting to emulate *Fawlty Towers* (John Sullivan's *Heartburn Hotel* showed that not everybody had shaken off the habit). First we had to wave off some dinosaurs, in particular *Drop the Dead Donkey*, which re-emerged for a final series in a shower of self-congratulation. *Father Ted* ended for different reasons, although this was always going to be the last series despite Dermot Morgan's untimely death.

Promising newcomers were *How Do You Want Me*, with Dylan Moran bringing some much needed comic timing to a comedy of towmie folk adrift in the country. *Men Behaving Badly*'s Simon Nye wrote this, as well as the mirth-free *Is It Legal?*, which only goes to illustrate the (some say) glorious unpredictability of the British one-man-and-a-typewriter approach to sitcom writing.

The American team-writers gave us *Ally McBeal* in a straight (as it were) swap for the fast disappearing *Ellen*, who came out and lost out. The refreshingly different *The Royle Family* took a somewhat Beckett-like approach to situ-



Those we have loved (clockwise from top): 'Vanity Fair', 'The Royle Family' and Delia Smith

ation (Northern family sits around watching TV, scratching their backsides) and concentrated on the comedy. *Big Train*, from *Father Ted*'s Graham Lineham and Arthur Matthews, promised much, but didn't know whether it wanted to be *Monty Python* or *The Fast Show*. You can't be both.

Just because you're well drawn doesn't mean you're funny
The malaise of the recent British sitcom spread to the emerging British animation scene. *Stressed Eric* and *Rez the Runt* were both superb animations which were badly

undermined by weak scripts. One would be mightily peeved having spent months painstakingly manipulating Plasticine if one one discovered that the writers hadn't taken a quarter the trouble.

You're famous. Here's a TV programme
Janet Street-Porter walked from Kent to Wales in *Coast to Coast*. Perhaps the BBC wanted her out of the office. Jools Holland's *Beat Route* ("here I am driving through a city I don't know much about") wasn't much of an improvement, though it did have better music. In *Tee Time*, Chris

Evans toured the world playing golf. He ain't stupid.

Other bad ideas
If *I Ruled the World* (debating society exercise that would struggle on Radio 4); *Food Fight* (comedy quiz about food - this year's winner of the Tlth and Fils prize for desperation); *Babes in the Wood*, the return of Miss World (and much else on Channel 5); and *Jo Whaley*, if God had meant pop stars to talk, he would have made them all Leonard Cohen.

Now everyone's a chat show host
Just to show up Ian Wright.

Johnny Vaughan, Jeremy Clarkson and the year's other chat show upstarts. Michael Parkinson made a comeback last January. Unfortunately, he started by interviewing David Attenborough, Billy Connolly and other, well, not exactly cutting-edge types. His interview with George Michael pointed to better things to come. His next guest is Geri Halliwell, apparently, who seems to follow George Michael everywhere these days. The most frightening interview of the year was Ruby Wax with OJ Simpson. If you didn't think the man was guilty before, you sure did now.

Quick steps to the brighter side of life

YOU WOULD have to be mad to watch the whole of this evening's *Dance Night* on BBC2 from start to finish. But you would be crazy to miss it altogether. The opportunity to be instructed in the waltz, live and salsa by that big fat show-off Alexei Sayle (no, that's his own description, not mine) is too funny to miss. Will he manage to convince the Great British Public that "dancing is beautiful, it'll make you live longer, be nicer, stand taller, smile brighter, and think more interesting thoughts". Well, I know it's true, but I'm biased.

His partner for the evening is the ballet dancer Deborah Bull, and she certainly has some interesting thoughts, even if they are not always convincing. Anyone would have to admit that it is a little bizarre to hear her claiming that the choreographer Kenneth MacMillan introduced realism into ballet, while the camera shows her in one of his works, held upside down, high above the glamorous Adam Cooper's head during what is supposed to be a wild seduction scene. We know about the *Kama Sutra*, but this is going too far.

Bull and Sayle are the hosts for the whole show, starting at 6.00 and going on until 1.50 tomorrow, and besides their nine highly varied main items they introduce some short archive films (from Torvill and Dean's *Boleto to Best Ballroom*) plus assorted celebrities from many fields telling about "my first dance lesson". Two feature films offer solid entertainment, and even if you feel, like me, that *A Chorus Line* lost a lot on being transferred from stage to screen, the Australian comedy *Strictly Ballroom* never miss-

DANCE

DANCE NIGHT
BBC2, TONIGHT

es a point with its canny, hilarious yet touching conflict between innovators and traditionalists.

If star quality is what you are after, dance doesn't come starker than Fonteyn and Nureyev in *Marguerite and Armand*. Fonteyn's contribution, reprised from her 1979 series *Magic of the Dance* (we deserve to see the whole of that again, soon), is a reminder that she was not only the best ballerina the Royal Ballet ever produced, but the best talker too: wise, witty and well-informed. Eat your heart out, Deborah Bull, famous as today's talking ballerina. Her courage in having ideas of her own is terrific, but I want more argument about the question she poses tonight - "Why is practically every woman I dance created by a man?" - while her comments on some of the greatest past (male) choreographers, and her illustration of their works, will leave many balletomanes wondering why the Royal Ballet School doesn't teach better dance history and a better grasp of style and content.

Bull is doubtless delighted that women contribute so much to the creative parts of the evening. Perhaps she can explain what Clara van Gool's short film *Nussin* is actually about, with its murderous couples trapped in a snowy railway station, but somehow managing to luxuriate in hot baths. Rosemary Lee's *Infanta*, I suspect, is not actually about anything, except a young girl with a fascinating face dancing through



The canny, hilarious comedy 'Strictly Ballroom'

a formal garden - but the child really does fascinate.

Siobhan Davies's *The Art of Touch* is something else again - one of the best works of the best living British choreographer, excitingly danced by the excellent dancers she made it for, inspired by Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas and a modern supplement for harpsichord by Matteo Fargion. Look how wonderfully it is filmed, too, under Ross MacGibbon's direction: this must be the best thing that sometimes infuriating chap (remember his daft Nureyev documentary?) has done.

Davies's work is not everybody's cup of tea, but those who like it will love it. Others may go for *Clubbing*, Marcus Ryder's film about young people who live only for the hours when they can dress up, make up, finesse their way ahead of the queue, get high on drink or

drugs, and dance the night away. Desperately they try to explain just what the appeal is, and if you (or me, thanks).

Any complaints? Frankly, yes; the evening tries to be too many things to too many people, and will leave each section of the audience wanting more of the kinds of dance they like, at the expense of the rest.

But it is worth a cheer or two that dear old Auntie Beeb has finally woken up to what good entertainment dance can be, and maybe we can hope they will in future squeeze just a little more of it, more regularly, into their programmes.

Meanwhile, enjoy; there must be something here that anyone can like, if only at the risk of living longer, standing taller and thinking more interesting thoughts.

JOHN PERCIVAL

A sumptuous tale with an extra twist

ROYAL OPERA

THE GOLDEN COCKEREL
SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE
LONDON



The mad Tsar Dodon

cytical twist, she is the voice of the cockerel seated at the side of the stage with her music stand and score, crowing on cue, but patiently awaiting her moment to deliver the death blow. A Russian mother who won't yield to mother Russia.

And so the diary of a madman - Tsar Dodon - is now under way. He who would sleepwalk his way through responsibility, who would sacrifice his own sons to superstition and whim, whose dreams, whose delusions are all on celluloid - like movies in his mind re-run nightly (by our friend the astrologer, of course) - is a ludicrous but terrifying figure of fun. The fool who would be king. He and his court look and behave - in Anthony Baker's striking theatrical coups, Hopkins plays the opening of the piece like a false start, taking out one curtain and bringing in another to mark the distinction between what is real and what is imagined. Magician and assistant - he in gaudy cerise velvet, she in a figure-hugging, gold-seamed number - now reveal to us a giant babushka doll containing - wait for it - a real babushka. In another neat and

of fantastical May Day parade, a chronicle of Russian propaganda, from framed photographs of her imperial past to representatives of industry and the military bearing models of their hardware, and climaxing with a space-walking cosmonaut. The opposition there of Rimsky's brazenly upbeat triumphalism and the weightless slow-motion and spotless white of the cosmonaut made for a thrilling theatricality.

Vladimir Jurowski (moved up from later performances to substitute for Gennadi Rozhdestvensky) duly took this as his moment to unrein the Royal Opera Orchestra. His was an unusually subtle and supple response to a score whose fragrance and refulgence can so easily detract from its underlying remorselessness. Beneath all that luminous melodic and harmonic filigree, a quasi-ness pervades. The Astrologer sets the tone with his strange, distracted otherworldly falsetto. Jean-Paul Fouchécourt caught the vocal ambiguity beautifully. As did the shapely Elena Kelessidi, suddenly, startlingly reborn as the Queen of Shemakhan, her "languid airs" festooned in shimmering coloratura to match the spottled gold of her attire. The mysterious cockerel in female form. The bird of paradise. Apologies were given on her behalf for a viral infection, but you would never have known it. Musically and dramatically, this was an accomplished evening.

As the final words of text came home to roost, so to speak, Hopkins, one felt, had nailed the subtext. "What will the new dawn bring?" asked the chorus, receding once more into the snowy darkness. "Emptiness," came the reply. Small wonder Tsar Nicholas II was not enamoured.

EDWARD SECKERSON

THIS WAS THE WEEK THAT WAS

Today On this day in 1895 the first film comedy was premiered, a rib-ticking short about a gardener who is tricked, by a japester messing around with his hose, into wetting himself. The lead part was played by the actual family gardener (typecast again) of the Lumière brothers.

Tomorrow In 1972 passengers from a plane which had crashed in the Andes were rescued, having survived by cannibalism; the 1993 fictionalised film of their ordeal, *Alive*, was almost as tasteless.

Wednesday In 1672 the first public concert was held "in a nasty hole" in central London, where a former royal musician, who had been sacked for being cheeky to the king, organised "very good music". The performers were separated by a curtain from the eating, drinking and smoking audience, who might have put the musicians off their notes.

Thursday Henri Matisse was born in 1869; he became the leader of Fauvism, the group of painters so called after being denounced as *Les Fauves* (wild animals) on the grounds that, being fully paid-up Bohemians, they didn't brush their hair much.

Friday The British Board of Film Censors started in 1913. Of the the year's 7,510 movies, most were given U certificates, with a few receiving As, while 22 were banned for suggestiveness, ridicule of vicars, excessive drunkenness or "abhorrent" native customs. In 1962 The Beatles auditioned for the Decca record label but were advised not to give up their day jobs.

Saturday The Royal Academy opened in 1769; the sound you heard last year was Sir Joshua Reynolds, its first president, turning in his grave at the sawn-up cow and child-molester-style figures in Saatchi's "Sensation" exhibition.

Sunday The first prison film show was held in a New South Wales nick in 1911; movies of "an elevating nature" included the New Wave epic *Waterways of Holland* and the canine cinema vérité classic *Dogs of Various Countries*.

JONATHAN SALE

★★★★★
"DELICIOUS"
Damon Smith, Attitude

★★★★★
"WONDERFULLY mischievous and refreshingly WICKED"
Belli Williams, Maxm

An OUTRAGEOUS blackfarce with a wicked, MANIC energy
Liese Sponner, The Independent

a film by François Ozon

sitcom

STARTS FRI 1 JAN

curzon
SOHO 071 724 1825

CHELSEA
070 97 0710

RICHMOND
071-332 3000

Filmhouse EDINBURGH
Cornerhouse MANCHESTER

NETWORK

A year is a long time in cyberspace

From Microsoft's legal battles to the development of online shopping, 1998 has seen major developments in information technology. By Andy Oldfield

Microsoft started 1998 considering a preliminary injunction granted by US District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson, prohibiting it from tying its Internet Explorer (IE) browser to the Windows 95 operating system. The company maintained that it was impossible to separate the browser and the operating system, so to comply with the injunction it proposed offering for sale an older version of Windows or a non-functional one. The US Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a claim for contempt asking that Microsoft be fined \$1m a day until it complied fully with the injunction. The matter was resolved when Microsoft agreed to let manufacturers delete the IE icon from the Windows desktop.

For the US government's anti-trust case into whether Microsoft had used illegal business practices to violate a 1995 consent decree, Judge Jackson appointed a "special master", Professor Lawrence Lessig, to collect evidence and propose a legal outcome. Microsoft objected to the appointment, saying that Lessig was demonstrably biased against the software company. In February, an appeals court suspended Lessig and the DOJ said that it was examining the possibility of filing fresh anti-trust charges against Microsoft.

In March, the DOJ confirmed that it was widening the scope of its investigations to include issues related to Sun Microsystems and the Java programming language. Microsoft's sales did not suffer. In March, the company joined the elite "market cap" club, passing the \$200bn market value level.

As the year progressed, both the DOJ and Microsoft made extensive use of the media to try and bolster their own cases. Microsoft's contention that the government was impeding its ability to innovate received some support when an appeal court overturned Judge Jackson's preliminary injunction and criticised the timing and rationale of the DOJ's case and its interpretation of the 1995 consent decree.

In May the DOJ was joined by 13 states which were also considering filing anti-trust lawsuits. Eventually a coalition of 20 states and the DOJ filed suits and Judge Jackson agreed to combine the complaints. A date of 8 September was set for the trial. As details of public access to pre-trial witness examinations was worked out, the trial date slipped to 23 September and then to 15 October and finally to 19 October. Proceedings were often low-key as

expert witnesses presented their testimony on matters such as the degree of integration between IE and Windows, and relationships between Microsoft and other companies such as Netscape Communications, Apple and Intel.

Videotape of Bill Gates being less than co-operative in his deposition provided some light relief. By the end of November, AOL's proposed \$4.2bn buyout of Netscape and a co-operative deal with Sun was announced. Earlier this month, Judge Jackson said it could "have an immediate effect on the definition of the market as we are contemplating it here".

By mid-December, one of the states dropped out of the case. South Carolina Attorney General Charles Condon said he felt that Microsoft was no longer harming competition in the hi-tech industry. "The merger of AOL with Netscape... proves that the forces of competition are working," he said. "Further government intervention or regulation is unnecessary and, in my judgement, unwise."

Findings released in January by Positive Support reviews suggested that Microsoft's browser had overtaken Netscape's in usage, but commentators were unsure of the methodology employed. More conventional studies, according to ZD Market Intelligence, showed that by June the number of PCs using

add-ons for Netscape browsers, would not be affected.

The International Telecommunications Union, meeting in Geneva in February, completed the technical specifications of the V90 standard for 56Kbps modems. Final approval of the draft standard came in September. Although hailed as a solution to compatibility issues, V90 still caused some problems. Users of Apple's iMac had difficulty in establishing a dial-up connection with their ISPs, a problem, Apple said, caused by ISPs not properly implementing V90 code.

At the end of February, the European Union criticised a US plan for reforming the Internet's naming and address system, saying that opening up control of domain names to a variety of US companies rather than the US government-contracted Network Solutions Inc (NSI) would still give Americans too much control of the Net. A plan to transfer the control of domain names to a non-profit international organisation was proposed in June. Agreement was reached between NSI, the US government and the EU for NSI's monopoly to end by September 2000.

The Java was reached court when, at a preliminary hearing in March, US District Court Judge Ronald Whyte ordered Microsoft to remove the Java-compatible logo from Internet Explorer and its Java software developer kit. Sun Microsystems said Microsoft had introduced non-standard operating system-specific features in its implementation of Java and had broken the terms of its Java license.

Last month, Judge Whyte said Sun was likely to prevail in court and he issued a preliminary injunction to stop Microsoft from selling any products that use Java, including Windows 98 and Internet Explorer, unless the software was modified to pass Sun's Java tests. Microsoft said it would comply. It also said it would no longer supply Java Virtual Machines for the Macintosh or Unix version of its browser. Microsoft later decided it would appeal against the preliminary injunction.

Steve Jobs, who had returned to Apple Computer in 1997 as interim CEO in an effort to reverse its declining fortunes, announced in April that the company had returned profits for two successive quarters on the back of high demand for Power Macintosh G3s. "Three months later, he reported that demand was outstripping supply and that more profits were in the offing. He hinted that the upcoming iMac could be the first Apple machine to win converts from current Windows PC users. The August launch of the iMac in the United States saw stores



Bill Gates was at the centre of attention for most of the year, thanks to the anti-trust case brought against Microsoft. Reuters



Enjoying a good year: Jerry Yang of Yahoo! (left) and Steve Jobs of Apple. Reuters



selling out on the first day. Although it was on sale for only 17 days in August, it was the second biggest-selling system that month, accounting for 7.1 per cent of all sales. Almost 13 per cent of all sales were to people replacing Windows PCs. In September, the iMac launched in Europe. A new version of the Macintosh operating system, MacOS 8.5, also shipped. By October, Jobs was able to report profits for four successive quarters.

Amazon.com, the online bookstore that has made \$2bn for its founder, Jeff Bezos, took its first steps into Europe in May with deals worth \$55m to buy the UK online bookseller Bookpages, the German

Internet bookshop Telebook and the Internet Movie Database. In June, it expanded into music sales, offering discounts of 10 to 40 per cent off retail prices. Even though the company has yet to show a profit in the "investment cycle" of its development, its share value surpassed \$100 in June and reached \$300 in December. It lost \$45m on revenues of \$155m in the third quarter, but saw 564 per cent growth in customers over the previous year.

Manoeuvring for position in the online music sales market took off in May when CDnow signed a \$14m deal with MTV to promote the Web as a mass market outlet. Following the entry of Amazon.com into the

market, CDnow said in October that it planned to merge with its rival, N2K.

Meanwhile, the MP3 de facto standard file format, popular among Web users and independent music distributors, suffered a setback when the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), citing fears of piracy, won a temporary injunction prohibiting Diamond from marketing its Rio music player, a Walkman-like device that plays music downloaded from the Net. The injunction was overturned last month.

In November, Iomega and Liquid Audio announced plans to work on technology to enable copyright-

protected online distribution of music. A similar initiative was announced this month by the RIAA, the major record labels, and leading technology companies.

The 25 June release date for Windows 98 did not slip. An update, rather than a new operating system, Microsoft said it was the final incarnation of DOS-based operating systems. The release was low-key compared with the launch of Windows 95, but 17 PC World stores opened at midnight in the UK and sold 1,081 units in one hour of trading. Within a month, one million upgrade units had been sold. The first update was posted on Microsoft's website in August, but the company claimed that it was for multimedia enhancements, rather than a bug fix.

In a year where all players in the portal website market were making deals and strategic alliances, Yahoo! maintained its position as market leader. In July, Yahoo! co-founders Jerry Yang and David Filo became billionaires when stock prices closed in at \$200 per share. By October, the company had tripled its turnover with profits of \$16.7m on net revenue of \$53.6m for its third quarter, compared with \$18.1m in the previous quarter.

September saw the launch of FreeServe - a subscription-free Internet service provider backed by Dixons and Energis. The intention was to increase Net traffic and open up the potential for electronic commerce. Although technical support was charged at £1 per minute, by last month the service had established itself as the UK's second-largest ISP with 475,000 users, close behind the UK's largest, AOL, with 500,000 paying users.

What changes will 1999 bring to your online life?

THE INTERNET changed our daily routines beyond all recognition in 1998. For the first time, many of us logged on and shopped for our Christmas presents online. You have sent your share of Christmas e-cards featuring South Park cartoons. You have probably been on the receiving end of at least a few of those killer attachments (and filtered out for ever the over-enthusiastic senders who clog up your in-box with animated bursts of Flash creativity).

You have watched Paul McCartney cooking live on www.broadcast.com, and even downloaded Linda's recipes from the website, since she seemed to be the only person on Earth who could make mung beans look tasty. Finally, you dragged your new, wafer-thin Viao laptop to your mother-in-law's for Christmas dinner. Now you can play new scenarios for Civilisation II and pick up your

e-mails using the infrared system on your newly acquired Nokia mobile phone and impress all your relatives with the magic of wireless communications. With all these new tricks we learned in 1998, is there anything left to discover in 1999?

You will be pleased to know that there will be plenty of new gizmos coming our way, and some of them may even turn out to be useful. My money is on a boom in hardware, driven by new hand-held devices, and particularly those that can keep us entertained while waiting for the night bus in Trafalgar Square. The Son-of-the-Palm-Pilot-and-Game-Boy will be born anytime now, so you will be able to find the number for your local minicab and play a quick game while you are waiting for it to turn up. Personal digital assistants are merging not only with mobile phones but also pagers, Walkmans, Mindisc

players and even watches. This trend towards combining personal organisers and entertainment will produce many new multifunctional gizmos that can be held in the palm of your hand. This is also driving developments in wireless connectivity, where everything has an infrared connection to other gizmos. True portability is just round the corner, freeing us forever from the narrow confines of the office.

However, the biggest developments in 1999 will be driven by that most urgent of human desires - the Need for Speed. I feel this need is beginning to affect my normally rational behaviour. Recently, I've started to contemplate moving to an area that provides cable modems. Migration patterns of the population following bandwidth availability have already been noted in leafy Hampstead. This quiet suburban



EVA PASCOE
The year's biggest changes will be driven by that most urgent of human desires - the Need for Speed

backwater has suddenly shot to fame, with the claim of being the first area in London where you can obtain an ADSL connection. Plugging this beauty into your

PC means sudden elevation to a higher level of the wired experience. A mere 56K mortal will feel like she or he has never surfed the Net before. Suddenly, online shopping takes two minutes instead of 10, video streams flow off the pipe in a pleasing, jerk-free fluidity and online radio becomes a viable alternative to Kiss FM.

The rollout of ADSL will also bring demands for more video on websites, and with rapidly decreasing costs of desktop video editing, more programmes will appear on topics not related to gardening, motoring or Delia Smith, and that is something I can't wait to see. I gave up on terrestrial television a long time ago, but still lurk at CNN and SkyNews. Now with ZDNet putting a new show online every day, I hope that my channel-zapping days are well and truly over. I predict 1999 will also be a big year for satellite Internet

connections, with football clubs cooking up new video-Web programmes that will not be available to the non-satellite Internet users.

I also expect online banking will take off next year, as the well-known British pastime of spending lunch hour queuing at the bank simply to pay the gas bill falls somewhat short of the desirable 21st-century banking experience. If my bank doesn't get its act together pretty soon, I will follow its CEO and move to an American competitor that understands my lifestyle and online payment systems. Bill Gates has been making noises about starting an online bank, and despite various misgivings about his style of software development, I would sign up as his e-wallet proposition is a lot more innovative than anything Barclays or Lloyds have yet to come up with.

Finally, I hope that 1999 will

also be the year when I will receive an e-mail response from my local MP. Even if it's an automatic acknowledgement, I will frame it, cherish it and hang it above my bed, thankful for the pleasure of living in the era where the Government understands that its function is customer service. Complaints departments will have to answer in 24 hours and deal with the matter within a day or I shall withdraw my taxes. If it wasn't for the incomprehensible lack of progress of the Inland Revenue's own online efforts, I could even be withdrawing my taxes electronically.

All in all, there's sure to be plenty of entertainment to look forward to in 1999, that is if Y2K doesn't muck up our computer-based society well in advance of the Big Day. Meanwhile, I wish you a year full of of techno-adventures - and a cable modem. *eva@never.com*

Which way Web sales?

IN CASE you it escaped your attention, last week was Christmas. And the high street is not the only place that has benefited from gift-giving. The Web has posted record sales as more and more busy people went online to play Santa.

For sites selling products and services, the audience is no longer visitors surfing the web, (http://www.independent.co.uk/n/01/980810ne/story5.html). Instead, they have become consumers. There are two sides to the consumer coin: marketing and selling.

Selling seems to be doing quite well, as evidenced by the online star, Amazon.com, whose stock has soared to over \$300. It is Web marketing - convincing a person to buy - that's struggling. Traditionally, marketing to the masses has been based on a passive model through print, television and radio ads. These require no immediate action by consumers, but instead they receive ads intended to influence or change their buying habits. There is some differentiation of ads for different audiences, but generally, ads are intended to appeal to as broad a segment of the population as possible.

The Web is supposed to be different. It is about the two-way transfer of information, and is an active medium where a website visitor is expected to interact with the content. The Web has indeed strengthened the voice of special interest groups, each with its own needs, concerns and desires.

Unfortunately, marketing on the Web became stuck early on with the generic banner ad. These are really nothing more than a concept borrowed from the world of print. They are general long graphics that span the top of the screen, often animated, and used just like print ads to capture the viewer's interest. Banner ads are also hypertextually linked to further information which viewers will

WEB DESIGN



JASON CRANFORD TEAGUE

"click-through", but often what the visitor finds at the other end is another idea borrowed from the print world - the brochure website: these simply present static information, just like a printed brochure.

How effective are banner ads and brochure sites? One school of thought is that if they didn't work they would not have endured. Yet they are little better than their counterparts in older media at engaging web users in active participation.

In other media, the value of an advertisement is based on the number of people seeing that advertisement. For most mediums this is scientifically calculated using careful measurements of circulation or the number of televisions or radios tuned in. But, you can throw these notions out of the window when it comes to measuring how many people see a banner ad on the Web, especially since the click-through rate is far more important than the number of eyeballs laid upon it.

Services, such as NetRatings and MediaMetrix, attempt to measure the number of visitors and how often they click on ads. Yet these services often provide completely different results for the same site. When websites go seeking ad revenues they can pick the numbers that paint their site in the best light.

While banner ads definitely generate revenue for a lot of different sites, it is questionable whether they capture customers for the firm paying for the ad. So, is the banner-ad/click-through/brochure-site model how online marketing should be pursued in future?

The Web is still a very young and underdeveloped medium, but one that has come of age in the era of big media with big expectations and highly refined methods, especially in marketing. It still requires testing and experimentation or it is possible that its full potential may never be realised.

So what should our strategy be? What are our other options in online marketing? Simple: Use the Web's strengths.

Unlike other mediums with limited bandwidth (there is only so much room on newsgroups' shelves or television channels), the web is infinite. You can set up as many sites as you wish and each can be narrowly focused for a specific audience. For about the price of a single TV ad, a firm can set up a website for its targeted audience. But why stop there? Why not target the people who influence the people who buy your product? Websites can be set up with content and functions that appeal to these trend-setters and be sponsored (rather than advertised on) by a company wishing to endear itself to this select audience. The Web may well change the nature of selling as we move from macro-marketing into niche-marketing.

Niche sites may have a small audience, but have the potential directly to reach the people interested in purchasing a particular product or service. They build brand loyalty, and in the future that'll be even more vital than brand recognition.

Send your comments or queries to Jason at indy_webdesign@mindspring.com

MY TECHNOLOGY

Fashion designer Amanda Wakeley on her Motorola StarTAC phone.

Interview by Jennifer Rodger

A mobile makes me far more efficient

I always makes me laugh to see people apparently talking to themselves while sitting in a car using a hands-free mobile device. But you know, - or rather hope - that this is not the case.

I have used mobile phones for quite a long time. I think back to my first mobile, eight years ago, which was like a brick, but heavier than one and with batteries that only lasted two hours. This one (the StarTAC) is relatively new. I got it about a year ago. Because I travel a lot, going to the West End for meetings, for instance. It means I can carry on working in the taxi or car. If you are sitting in traffic you might as well be making phone calls. My day doesn't stop now.

I must say this mobile is brilliant. The only time it doesn't work is when you use it in America, which is a law unto itself. American cellular phones are on completely different systems. But when I was somewhere remote, such as Zanzibar last year, it worked a treat. One thing I don't like about using mobile phones, particularly this one, is that I am not convinced it is at all healthy - what with the reports relating the signals to

cancer. And you can't get one of those earpieces for the StarTAC, which would reduce the worry. Plus, I am not convinced Motorola has got the equipment right. There is a fragility about the design; it can break while you are trying to fold it down. This is my third one.

To be honest, the multitude of mobiles you can now get makes choosing one very confusing. Well, I find it so! In the end, I chose a StarTAC because it has a long battery life, is light and compact. The batteries are so tiny I don't mind carrying them. And I can just turn off my mobile when I don't feel like answering it.

It has an answer phone, so that's fine - it can take the messages. I am not someone who wastes a lot of time on the phone, although I do use it to keep in touch with my friends and family, but it is generally for calls of a business nature or to make arrangements quickly.

Most people I come in contact with in fashion have a mobile. I don't have a secretary and use voicemail instead - both in the office and at home. So this technology means I don't need a receptionist: everyone in my office has their own phone lines and voicemail. You think of an



Amanda's mobile keeps her working on the road Phil Meech

office with 30 people who are all likely to receive about 40 personal calls per day, which a receptionist would have to sort. I think it's fine that people can now go straight through to the person they want to speak to: it's much more efficient and the concept of someone answering phones just to put you through is outdated.

Efficiency is why new technology appeals to me. Everything is becoming a lot more convenient. I have heard people call it the trend towards cocooning. Doing things such as supermarket shopping on the Internet means we are more likely to stay inside. But I think the convenience of shopping on the PC will never take away the luxurious feeling you can get from touching items, from feeling clothes. However, on the other hand, if you know a brand like ours,

you can assume the feel and quality will be there. Plus the whole idea behind Amanda Wakeley's collaboration with Principles has been to make designer clothes more accessible to a wider audience - perhaps for people who don't live in one of the major cities.

Other than this, I use e-mail a little bit, but it's still a mystery to me. But I am coming round to it. As you can probably tell, I am not a natural tech-nerd - or whatever they call it - but I absolutely love the convenience of it. I just think it's a more competitive world, so we have to be more efficient in our work practices.

Amanda Wakeley designs for Principles are available online at <http://www.principles.co.uk/amawakeley>

TEL: 0171 293 2222

CLASSIFIED

FAX: 0171 293 2505

Oracle Applications Consultant, Reading

Experienced Contract Implementation Consultant required for major project work. Essential skills are Oracle Financials (AP, AR, FA, OE, Distribution, Purchasing, Bill of Materials, Inventory) and Oracle manufacturing and (GEMMS).

Project Management, knowledge of bar coding and good communications skills are also necessary.

CV's to Levon Antonian - cvs@tcsr.co.uk or telephone: 0171 317 3118.

Small expanding software consultancy requires skilled IT staff to fill various positions. The successful candidates will ideally possess a degree and a minimum of two years experience in any of the following skills:

- * Unix * ORACLE * C, C++ * ERP
- * COBOL * Visual C++
- * Website Development IBM Mainframe (YZK AS/400, RPG/400)
- * DBA's (DB2, Sybase, Informix)

CV's to Goodworth Software Consulting Ltd., 6-8 Underwood Street, London N7 7JQ

City Bank requires an ANALYST/DEVELOPER with advanced knowledge of SQL server and other Microsoft products. The successful candidate will be a graduate with a minimum two years relevant experience and hold Microsoft accreditation. Salary Neg. CV's to Box No 21015A, Islington, London N1 2XQ.

MASTECH

Mastech Systems Corporation UK require IT Business Analysts, Systems Analysts, Project Managers, and Computer Professionals at all levels for client projects throughout the UK. Applicants will ideally be degree educated with over two years experience in any of the following areas:

- Mainframe**
 - * COBOL CICS DB2
 - * ASSEMBLER 370
 - * UNISYS LINC
 - * VAX/VMS
- Mid Range**
 - * AS/400
 - * RPG/400
- Client/Server**
 - * Oracle Developer 2000
 - * Oracle Forms, Pro*C, C
 - * Visual Basic/Visual C++
 - * Windows SDK, AIX/SUN
 - * UNIX/Novell Systems Admin
 - * ICF, FOCUS
 - * UNIX/C/C++
- ERP Packages**
 - * Oracle Financials/Manufacturing
 - * PeopleSoft
 - * JD Edwards
 - * SAP/BASIS
 - * BAAN
 - * SYNON

The ERP position require in-depth functional Business knowledge in one of the following areas:

- * Manufacturing
- * Finance & Accounting
- * Human Resource Management
- * Materials Management
- * Distribution
- * Marketing
- * Costing
- * MRP

If you possess the skills, please write to us enclosing your full CV to:

MASTECH

Station House, Station Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1HX

email: sunb@eu.mastech.com Fax: 01344 788301

IT MANAGER

£25-30,000 + benefits

North West London TEC and Business Link provide a range of services aimed at supporting business competitiveness and improving the skills of local people to promote economic growth in Brent and Harrow.

Reporting to the Director of Strategy and Communications, this role is responsible for maintaining the provision of computer services and support (hardware and software) for all staff (c.90), supported by a small team. Adopting a hands-on approach when necessary, the postholder will need to develop and implement a proactive IT strategy.

You must have a proven track record in computer systems support/administration, network management, PC/network configuration, supplier management, user support, systems evaluation & selection as well as policy development and implementation, probably supported by an IT or Business Systems qualification at HND or equivalent. Familiarity with Novell Netware, Windows, Unix, INGRES, SQL, MS-Office 97, Windows Messaging client, MS-Mail & Schedule 7 is highly desirable.

Self-motivated and an enthusiastic and committed team member, you will need to:

- * demonstrate an ability to be flexible;
- * work to tight deadlines under pressure;
- * be able to propose and work within set budgets;
- * deal successfully with colleagues at all levels;
- * demonstrate a keen understanding of quality and equality of opportunity issues;
- * practice excellent customer care;
- * have successfully managed staff.

For an application form and more information please ring 0181 901 5000/5153 or email us at vacancies@nwltc.co.uk

Closing date for applications: Monday 18th January, 1999.

North West London TEC and Business Link is committed to equal opportunities. We guarantee to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria.



How much will you be earning in 2 years' time?

Computer specialists expect panic in 2000. The British Computer Society predicts that programmers paid £250 a day at present will be able to command £1000 a day in 2000.

To find out whether you have the aptitude to become a computer programmer, contact Computech International today. Computech specialises in programming and systems analysis training and has exhibited thousands of people from widely-differing backgrounds to enter rewarding computing careers. Previous experience, qualifications, age, race or gender are not important. What you need are determination and aptitude.

Computech can easily test your aptitude - and if you've got it, how much could you be earning in 2 years' time?

For a free information pack telephone

0800 657 657

* Source: Financial Times September '97

Computech International Ltd. Est. 1964

No catches, No gimmicks, No commitments

Start with just £25

Communications

All Rates are

All day, Every day

£5 FREE CALLS

UK LOCAL / NATIONAL

3.5 p

AUSTRALIA 9 p

FRANCE 9 p

INDIA 36 p

IRELAND 9 p

ISRAEL 15 p

MALAYSIA 15 p

NIGERIA 35 p

NETHERLANDS 9 p

NEW ZEALAND 9 p

PAKISTAN 46 p

TURKEY 25 p

USA 5 p

CALL FREE 0800 634 2000

All the above prices are in pence per minute plus 10p per hour, VAT, E.C.D.C.

Get ready for the biggest IT career event ever held in the City!

1000's of great vacancies with leading companies at all levels, on all systems, & in all areas of computing.

Make sure you visit

IT in the City

WEDNESDAY 20TH JANUARY 1999 • 11.30 am - 7.00 pm
THE GIBSON HALL, 13 BISHOPSGATE, (corner of Threadneedle St), EC2.

• Nearest Rail: Liverpool Street, Cannon Street • Nearest Tube: Liverpool Street, Bank, Monument.

• Admission Free • Refreshments available •

IT in the City is the first major IT recruitment event of 1999, and the biggest ever staged in the Square Mile, and like all good job fairs it's a great opportunity to take that next step on your career path. You can meet a huge variety of the country's leading IT recruitment consultants & companies and gain expert career advice from the professionals in a relaxed and informal atmosphere to ensure that your interests are best represented. So, whatever stage you are at in your IT career, if you are looking for progression, security, more money, or just looking for a change, then don't miss the chance to check out all the possibilities.

For all IT professionals

- HELP DESK ■ TRAINERS ■ DATA MANAGERS ■ PC, NETWORK, & SYSTEMS
- SUPPORT ADMINISTRATORS, ANALYSTS, DEVELOPERS, & PROGRAMMERS
- BUSINESS ANALYSTS & CONSULTANTS ■ SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS
- PROJECT MANAGERS ■ TESTERS ■ TECHNICIANS ■ SYSTEMS ENGINEERS
- TECHNOLOGY MANAGERS and many, many more ...

IT in the City is organised by Midweek Magazine, part of Independent Magazines (UK) Ltd. Tel: 0171 636 3666 for details.

EUROBOND TRADER

Leading Investment Bank seeks an experienced and resourceful Eurobond Trader to work within their Fixed Income Division. The primary products used are Eurobonds and Yankers although other product knowledge would be useful.

Candidates should be high quality graduates trained within a leading US based financial institution. US domestic experience is vital for this position as the successful candidate will be expected to market and trade with expertise from the outset. The role requires an individual who is used to working under extreme pressure and has a successful track record in revenue generation. In addition you will need to be Series 7 and SFA registered with a broad industry knowledge, excellent communication and marketing skills.

If you have all the above skills, we will be interested to hear from you. Please send a copy of your updated Curriculum Vitae to:

PO BOX NO 12925,
Independent Classified, 19th Floor,
One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL

Bedales School

PETERSFIELD, HANTS GU22 2DG
tel: 01730 500100 fax: 01730 500500
email: admission@bedales.org.uk

RESIDENT HOUSE ASSISTANT

A full-time house assistant required to work as part of a team in a busy girls' boarding house. This will involve evening duties and some weekend work.

Applications in writing, please, to the Head, Alison Willocks, including full curriculum vitae and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of three referees. Further details will be sent on request.

Legal Notices

No. 006725 of 1998
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT

IN THE MATTER OF CAPLIN CYBERNETICS CORPORATION LIMITED
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated Wednesday the 4th day of December 1998 confirming the consolidation of the Share Premium Account of the Company was registered by the Registrar of Companies on 17th December. Dated the 18th day of December 1998.

Pinnans, 17 Castle Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7SR.

Solicitors to the Company

THIS NEWSPAPER AND YOU

If you have a complaint about an item in this newspaper which concerns: inaccuracies, intrusion, harassment or discrimination, write to the editor about it.

If you're still dissatisfied you can write to the Press Complaints Commission.

An independent organisation established to uphold an editorial Code of Practice for the Press.

THIS NEWSPAPER ABIDES BY THE PCC'S DECISIONS

PC

1 SALISBURY SQUARE

LONDON EC4A 3AF

Telephone 0171 353 1248

Fax 0171 353 8355

For your last copy, contact the publisher

Don't forget to mention The Independent when replying to adverts

GET PAID FOR READING BOOKS

It's true! You can earn up to £500 a week as a Freelance Proofreader and Copy Editor. No experience needed.

Unique home-study course reveals all you need to know. For a FREE special report and details of how to claim your FREE trial lesson write to: Maple Publishing, (Dept PR15), FREEPOST HA4446, Southall, Middlesex, UB1 3BL. Or call free

0800-542-9668 (Quote Ref PR15)

'PERFECT TIMING... PERFECT BUSINESS!'

Internet marketing is the growth business of the century. City 2000 PLC is establishing an enviable lead in this field, as it moves into hypergrowth. On offer for ambitious, self-motivated individuals is a unique business timing opportunity of a lifetime, with professional training and support, to make their own unprecedented fortunes. Take 10 minutes to find out how and why you could join our winning team now, and retire within 3 years!

Call and listen to Robert Pearson www.city2000.co.uk

Independent Senior Marketing Consultant, on 0181 387 9071

(£3 hrs normal rates apply)

MONDAY RADIO

RADIO 1
(97.6-99.8MHz FM)
7.00 Chris Moyles. **10.00** Radio 1's All Time National Anthems.
6.00 The Best of Lamacq Live.
12.00 The Breakfast. **2.00** Emma B. **4.0-7.0** Clive Warren.

RADIO 2
(88.9-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 Mo Dutta: The Dawn Patrol: news, views and music. **8.05** Sarah Kennedy. **10.00** Steve Wright's Million Sellers. **12.00** Alan Freeman. **2.00** Red's Simply Soulful Christmas: Mick Hucknall picks his favourite records for Christmas and reveals which artists have influenced his career. **3.00** The Festive Jukebox. **5.00** Johnnie Walker. **7.00** Humphrey Lyttelton. **8.00** Big Band Christmas Special. **8.30** Jools Holland Christmas Special. **9.30** In the Days Before Rock 'n' Roll. **10.30** Bob Harris. **12.00** Katrina Leskanich. **3.0-4.0** Nicky Home.

RADIO 3
(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air.
9.00 Masterworks.
10.30 Artist of the Week.
11.00 Sound Stories.
12.00 Composer of the Week: Camille Saint-Saens.
1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert.
2.00 The BBC Orchestras.
3.50 The Harmonic Series.
4.00 Mozart Voices.
4.45 Music to Die For.
5.00 A Medieval Christmas.
5.30 Music Rooms.
6.00 Discovering Music with Leonard Slatkin.
7.00 Cabaret Cocktails. See *Pick of the Day*.
7.30 Performance on 3. Another chance to hear ten of the most memorable concerts of the 1998 BBC Proms season at the Royal Albert Hall, London. 6: Prom 72, given on 11 September. Ruth Ziesak (soprano), Bernarda Fink (contralto), Herbert Lippert (tenor), Neal Davies (bass), Arnold Schoenberg Choir, Chamber Orchestra of Europe/Nikolaus Harnoncourt. Beethoven: Missa solemnis. (R)
9.00 Postscript. Peter Holland talks to ten Shakespeare experts about the Bard today. 1: Shake-

PICK OF THE DAY

WITH DIARIES, short stories and readings, Alan Bennett (right) now seems to have become a firmly established part of the Christmas ritual. Today he begins an atmospheric five-part reading of Peter Pan and Wendy (9.45am R4 FM).

is explored by his most recent biographer, Park Honan, and Katherine Duncan-Jones, who edited the Sonnets. After last week's "Christmas Cocktails" (7pm R3) with Noel Coward, et al, alas, the wordless purity of the originals is sullied by Robert Cushman's commentary, and it's just not the same. **ROBERT HANKS**



peare's Life and Work". With biographer Park Honan and Katherine Duncan-Jones, editor of the sonnets. See *Pick of the Day*.
9.20 Brodsky Quartet. Introduced by Nicola Heywood Thomas. Shostakovich: String Quartet No 11, Op 122. Mozart: String Quartet in B flat, K458 (Hunt). Schubert: String Quartet in A minor, D804.
10.45 Mixing It. Mark Russell and Robert Sandall scan the passing year and play tracks from the 'Mixing It' listeners' top ten albums of the year.
11.30 Jazz Notes.
12.00 Composer of the Week: Georges Bizet. (R)
1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4
(92.4-94.6MHz FM)
6.00 Today.
9.00 NEWS: Start the Week.
9.45 Serial: Peter Pan and Wendy. See *Pick of the Day*.
10.00 NEWS: Woman's Hour.
11.00 NEWS: Dear Peter Pan. (R)
11.30 My Gaiety Girls.
12.00 NEWS: You and Yours.
12.57 Weather.
1.00 The World at One.
1.30 Counterpoint.
2.00 NEWS: The Archers.
2.15 NEWS: Afternoon Play: Open Secrets.
3.00 Money Box Live.
3.30 The Small Ad. (R)
3.45 Nay, Ivy, Nay.
4.00 NEWS: The Food Programme.
4.30 Turning World.
5.00 PM.
5.57 Weather.

6.00 Six O'Clock News.
6.30 I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue.
7.00 NEWS: The Archers.
7.15 Front Row. 'The Stephen King Interview'. In his first radio interview for many years, the world's best-selling author talks to Mark Lawson about a life of horror. (R)
7.45 Under One Roof. The second of three five-part dramatisations from the Michele Hanson stories. As New Year approaches, everyone feels rather fragile. There may be a few broken bones - and even hearts - before 1 January dawns. With Janet Maw, Edna Dore and Luisa Bradshaw-White. Director Marilyn Imlie (1/5).
8.00 NEWS: Brass Barmy. Natalie Wheen visits music-mad Wardle High School, which has no less than ten brass bands and countless ensembles. (R)
8.30 Analysis. 'The Truth is Inside You'. As we unravel the human genome, we also gain knowledge which might be too hot to handle. Ian Hargreaves asks how this scientific revolution will affect both the way we see ourselves and the way we organise society.
9.00 NEWS: Nature: A Wolf to the North. Heading north into the Alaskan interior, Jim Crumley uncovers the bitter controversy surrounding the hunting of wolves inside Alaska's most famous nature reserve. Denali National Park. He is forced to examine his own prejudices over hunting the animals that symbolise all he loves.
9.30 Start the Week. Jeremy Paxman and guests set the cultural agenda for the week.
10.00 The World Tonight. With Sue Cameron.
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Five Daisies. 1: Mrs Bixby and the Colonel's Coat by Roald Dahl, read by Joanna Lumley. When Mrs Bixby's lover ends their affair, he gives her a mink coat. How can she explain to her husband where the coat has come from?
11.00 Radio 4 Appeal. Jo Brand speaks on behalf of HMD Response, a women's centre and a rape and trauma counselling service in Bosnia.
11.02 The Man without the Mobile.
11.30 The Bells of Russia.
12.00 News.
12.30 The Late Book: The Re-straint of Beasts.
12.48 Shipping Forecast.
1.00 As World Service.
5.30 World News.
5.35 Shipping Forecast.
5.40 Inshore Forecast.
5.45 Prayer for the Day.
5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today.

RADIO 5
(93.0-95.0MHz FM)
6.00 Six O'Clock News.
6.30 I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue.
7.00 NEWS: The Archers.
7.15 Front Row. 'The Stephen King Interview'. In his first radio interview for many years, the world's best-selling author talks to Mark Lawson about a life of horror. (R)
7.45 Under One Roof. The second of three five-part dramatisations from the Michele Hanson stories. As New Year approaches, everyone feels rather fragile. There may be a few broken bones - and even hearts - before 1 January dawns. With Janet Maw, Edna Dore and Luisa Bradshaw-White. Director Marilyn Imlie (1/5).
8.00 NEWS: Brass Barmy. Natalie Wheen visits music-mad Wardle High School, which has no less than ten brass bands and countless ensembles. (R)
8.30 Analysis. 'The Truth is Inside You'. As we unravel the human genome, we also gain knowledge which might be too hot to handle. Ian Hargreaves asks how this scientific revolution will affect both the way we see ourselves and the way we organise society.
9.00 NEWS: Nature: A Wolf to the North. Heading north into the Alaskan interior, Jim Crumley uncovers the bitter controversy surrounding the hunting of wolves inside Alaska's most famous nature reserve. Denali National Park. He is forced to examine his own prejudices over hunting the animals that symbolise all he loves.
9.30 Start the Week. Jeremy Paxman and guests set the cultural agenda for the week.
10.00 The World Tonight. With Sue Cameron.
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Five Daisies. 1: Mrs Bixby and the Colonel's Coat by Roald Dahl, read by Joanna Lumley. When Mrs Bixby's lover ends their affair, he gives her a mink coat. How can she explain to her husband where the coat has come from?
11.00 Radio 4 Appeal. Jo Brand speaks on behalf of HMD Response, a women's centre and a rape and trauma counselling service in Bosnia.
11.02 The Man without the Mobile.
11.30 The Bells of Russia.
12.00 News.
12.30 The Late Book: The Re-straint of Beasts.
12.48 Shipping Forecast.
1.00 As World Service.
5.30 World News.
5.35 Shipping Forecast.
5.40 Inshore Forecast.
5.45 Prayer for the Day.
5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today.

6.06 Six O'Clock News.
7.30 The Monday Match. Coverage of Leicester v Blackburn in the FA Carling Premiership.
10.00 20th-Century Vox - Great Sporting Moments. Sybil Ruscoe looks back on the century's sporting highlights.
11.00 Late Night Live. Nick Robinson sets tomorrow's agenda today. Including at 11.00 a late news briefing.
1.00 Up All Night.
4.00 Extra Time. (R)
5.00 - 6.00 Off piste. (R)

CLASSIC FM
(100.0-101.9MHz FM)
6.00 Nick Bailey. **8.00** Children's Hall of Fame Hour: Henry Kelly presents a selection of children's favourites. **12.00** Requests. **2.00** Classic Celebrity Recitals: Violinist Joti Hattori plays works by Fritz Kreisler. **3.00** Michael Mappin. **7.00** Smooth Classics at Seven. **9.00** Evening Concert: Rossini: William Tell Overture. Royal Opera House Orchestra/Carlo Rizzi. Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf. Christopher Lee (narrator), English String Orchestra/Yehudi Menuhin. Debussy: La boîte à joujoux. Lyon Opera Orchestra/Kent Nagano. Saint-Saens: Carnival of the Animals. Katia and Marielle Labèque (pianos), Mischa Maisky (cello), Evelyn Glennie (percussion). **11.00** Alan Mann. **2.00** Classic Celebrity Recitals. **3.0-6.0** Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO
(102.1-102.4MHz FM)
6.00 Jeremy Clark. **10.00** Russ Williams. **1.00** Nick Abbott. **4.00** Harriet Scott. **7.30** Mark Forrest. **10.00** Richard Allen. **1.00 - 6.00** James Merritt.

WORLD SERVICE RADIO
(198kHz LW)
1.00 Newsdesk. **1.30** Seven Days. **1.45** World Tales. **2.00** Newsday. **2.30** On Screen. **3.00** World News. **3.05** World Business Report. **3.15** Sports Roundup. **3.30** Watershed. **4.00 - 7.00** The World Today.

TALK RADIO
6.00 Breakfast Show with Sally Meen. **9.00** Scott Chisholm. **12.00** An Audience with Nicholas Parsons. **1.00** The Sports Zone. **8.00** James Whala. **1.00 - 6.00** Gordon Astley.

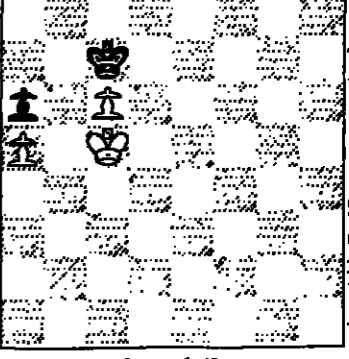
INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESS

JON SPEELMAN

FOR THE last Monday of the year an endgame theme seemed in order, and why not go to the end of the alphabet too, with that essential concept zugzwang?

Now adopted into English from the original German, zugzwang is applied to a position in which, in contrast to the normal situation, it is a disadvantage to be on move. Sometimes one side can manoeuvre to put the other "into zugzwang" even if originally they had the move. But in other cases, this is impossible: so-called "mutual zugzwang", as in this, the fundamental position of all endgame play.



Triangulation
his adversary on play. The method here is called "triangulation" after the White king march from d4-c4-d5. Black cannot follow suit since his king can't go to d7.
1.Kd5 Kc8 2.Kd4 Kd8 3.Kc4 Kc8 4.Kd5 Kc8 5.Kd6 Kc8 6.c7 and wins



White to play and win
Richard Reti 1922

Mutual zugzwang. White to play
1 d7+
If 1 Ke5 Kd7 2 Kd5 Kd8! draws - but not 2... Ke6?? 3 Ke6 when it's now Black's move.
1... Kd8 2 Kd6 stalemate
Whereas with Black to move 1... Kd8 2 d7 Ke7 3 Ke7 wins.

See next diagram: In this much more difficult position, White starts off apparently in zugzwang but is able to "lose a move" (to threaten) to reach the same position, but with

Both the first two examples were rather dry and technical. Not so this beautiful study. Black is threatening to draw with 1... Kb5. The solution is just two exquisite moves:
1 Nd4+ Kc5 2 Kh1!! zugzwang

BRIDGE

ALAN HIRON

A RECURRENT tactical problem comes up in the closing stages of a big pairs event. You are doing well but not quite well enough to be in the big money unless you end with a few near tops. South was in just that position on this deal when he heard his partner open One Club.

As you can see, Six Clubs would have been an excellent contract and, in practice, would have scored some 75 per cent. A gamble on Seven Clubs would have yielded a top score (thanks to the diamond finesse) but, after some rather haphazard approach shots, South decided to try for 6 No-trumps - obviously not as good as the small slam in clubs, but standing to score more.

Game all: dealer North

North	South
♠ A 7 4 3	♠ K 9
♥ none	♥ A J 9 3
♦ 7 4 2	♦ A Q 6 5
♣ A K 10 8 5 4	♣ A Q 9

West	East
♠ 8 5 2	♠ Q J 10 6
♥ K 10 8 6 4 2	♥ Q 7 5
♦ 9 3	♦ K J 10 8
♣ 6 3	♣ 7 2

West, reluctant to lead away from ♠K into a suit that South had bid, chose a passive club lead, giving declarer breathing-space. A successful diamond finesse meant that there were not 11 tricks in sight and, at trick 3, South ducked a diamond to East. A diamond came back but West showed out, leaving only limited squeeze chances to save the day.

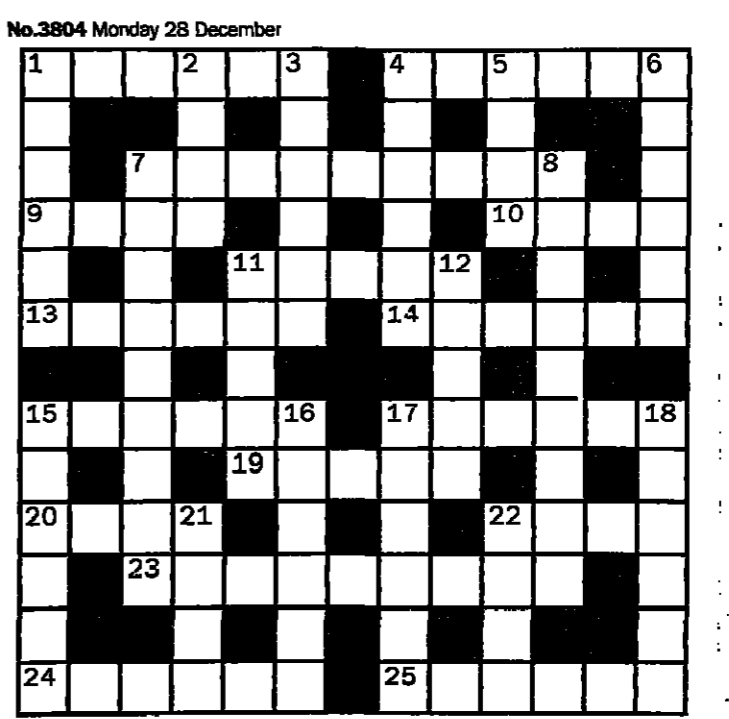
South started by cashing ♠A and then settled down to run the rest of the clubs. East, forced to keep ♠J, let his hearts go first but, on the last club, had to come down

to ♠Q J. Declarer threw his now useless ♠6 and West was squeezed in diamonds and spades. He threw ♠2 and dummy's ♠7 became declarer's 12th trick.

East should have trusted his partner to hold the third round of spades as otherwise the ace could not be defended. If he keeps ♠Q and ♠J and West retains ♠8 5 2, there is no squeeze.

That was a triumph but, again pushing too hard, North-South collected three poor scores out of the last four deals and so slipped out of contention.

CONCISE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Piercing (6)
 - Device for securing ship (6)
 - Clerk (9)
 - Distinctive quality (4)
 - Dread (4)
 - Not intoxicated (5)
 - Inner material (6)
 - Cause to remember (6)
 - Tight embrace (6)
 - Carry out (6)
 - Prestige (5)
 - Follow (4)
 - Soothing ointment (4)
 - Floating navigational aid (9)
 - Excellent (3-3)
 - Join forces (6)
- DOWN**
- Untidy writing (6)
 - Thought (4)
 - Pet (3-3)
 - Reply (6)
 - Restaurateur worker (4)
 - Epitome of straightness (6)
 - Chief (9)
 - Chart with contours (6,3)
 - Quick bite (5)
 - Picture puzzle (5)
 - Prestigious association (6)
 - Keep quiet (4,2)
 - Part of vessel (6)
 - Bewail (6)
 - Liquid measure (4)
 - Account (4)
- Solutions to last Saturday's Concise Crossword:**
ACROSS: 1. Flyer, 3. Serenata (Place of beauty), 9. Tempo, 10. Epitaph, 11. Flag, 13. Pictorial, 14. Libido, 16. Rework, 18. Overlap, 20. Ran, 21. Initiate, 23. Thrush, 25. Euboreal, 26. Swab. DOWN: 1. Patch, 2. Arm, 4. Abness, 5. Appense, 6. Neighbour, 7. Hammock, 8. Pomp, 12. Gibberish, 14. Lousine, 15. Despair, 17. Poets, 19. Putt, 21. Nabob, 24. Raw.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

WHAT BETTER way to wake you up from your post-Christmas stupor than with a bracing bite from a shark? The shark theme runs through the evening on Discovery. Highlights include: Shark Island (6.30pm); Wilder Discovery: Zambesi Shark (8pm); Hammerheads (9pm); Jaws in the Med (10pm); and Sharks: the Real Story (11pm).

Further thrills and spills are provided by Independence Day (5.37-7.22pm). See *Pick of the Day*. **11.00** Shark - the Real Story (11pm). See *Pick of the Day*. **12.00** Padal for the Planet (11.57-12.00). **1.00** Connections 2 by James Burke (11.57-12.00). **1.30-2.00** Ancient Warriors (11.57-12.00).



SKY PREMIER
6.00 Back to the Future, Part II (1993) (60577). **8.00** Mrs Winterbourne (1996) (3952577). **9.00** Dragonheart (1998) (91240948). **11.35** Hamlet (1996) (9120157). **1.40** Mrs Winterbourne (1996) (2602635). **3.30** Barry Norman's Films of the Year (1998). **4.45** Back to the Future, Part II (1993) (34818). **6.35** Dragonheart (1998) (91240948). **8.00** Independence Day (1996) (1331374). See *Pick of the Day*. **10.20** Absolute Power (1997) (3059645). **12.25** The Great White Hope (1998) (959349). **1.55** Dead Silence (1998) (703558). **3.15 - 5.00** Rich Man's Wife (1998) (2167981).

SKY MOVIE MAX
6.00 The Way to Dusty Death (1995) (82835). **8.00** The Associate (1996) (3211). **10.00** James and the Giant Peach (1996) (67003). **11.30** That's Right - You're Wrong (1997) (82374). **1.00** They Want Me (1997) (82374). **3.00** The Way to Dusty Death (1995) (82835). **5.00** The Associate (1996) (3211). **7.00** James and the Giant Peach (1996) (67003). **8.00** White Squall (1996) (343357). **11.00** Maximum Security (1998) (37781). **12.30** Box of Moonlight (1997) (55523). **2.20** Big Trouble in Little China (1986) (34482). **4.00 - 5.00** Touched by Evil (1998) (57722).

SKY CINEMA
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY ONE
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY TWO
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY THREE
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY FOUR
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY FIVE
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY SIX
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY SEVEN
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY EIGHT
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY NINE
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY TEN
4.00 Mr and Mrs Smith (1941) (7207883). **6.00** See Wolves (1990) (633545). **8.00** Zulu (1964) (8849175). **10.15** The Name of the Rose (1986) (8823003). **12.25** Monsieur Beauchamp (1942) (8306839). **2.05** Sherlock Holmes and the Scarlet Claw (1942) (8823833). **3.25** Hollywood Hall of Fame (1998) (8823833). **5.25** House of Seven Gables (1940) (8858977). **5.30** Close.

SKY SPORTS 1
7.00 Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre. **7.00** Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre. **7.00** Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre. **7.00** Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre. **7.00** Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre. **7.00** Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre. **7.00** Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre. **7.00** Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre. **7.00** Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre. **7.00** Sports Centre. **8.00** Sports Centre. **9.00** Sports Centre. **10.00** Sports Centre. **11.00** Sports Centre. **12.00** Sports Centre. **1.00** Sports Centre. **2.00** Sports Centre. **3.00** Sports Centre. **4.00** Sports Centre. **5.00** Sports Centre. **6.00** Sports Centre.

Channel 5

Hill: That he's an outsider; albeit one who was accepted. A profile of Jimmy Hill is, more exciting.

balanced selection, including new works, with enough to satisfy purists without provoking a turn-off for the rest.

Find the perfect h
would mean Leg

e for a modern estate. You'd think that
sticks, but you'd be surprised.

hopeless beginner, approves and the two as she is drawn slowly out of her shell. A

come soulmates
ical.

FILM OF THE DAY

